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# BRITISH CHESS MAGAZINE

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## BCM Interview:

# ALIREZA FIROUZJA ON THE FUTURE OF CHESS

*THE YOUNG GRANDMASTER DISCUSSES THE IMPORTANCE OF NEW FORMATS AND HOW THE GLOBAL CHESS LEAGUE IS SHAPING THE FUTURE OF THE GAME*

## India's rise to chess supremacy

AN IN-DEPTH REPORT ON THE 45TH CHESS OLYMPIAD IN BUDAPEST

# IMPRESSUM

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INDIA DOMINATES THE CHESS OLYMPIAD IN BUDAPEST

# INDIA'S RISE TO CHESS SUPREMACY

By GM Aleksandar Colovic; www.alexcolovic.com

Photo: FIDE Official / Michal Walusza, Maria Emelianova, Stev Bonhage

*India's young chess stars shone brightly at the 45th Chess Olympiad in Budapest, claiming a stunning victory against the world's top contenders. With convincing victories in both the Open and the Women's Olympiad, they proved that a new era in chess has arrived*

The 45th chess Olympiad took place in Budapest from 11 to 22 September. Coinciding with FIDE's 100-year anniversary, it became a standout event in more than one way.

Almost 190 countries participated as every next Olympiad seeks to break the record

of the previous one when it comes to the number of participating countries. This is amply aided by FIDE, which provides financial help to the federations that cannot afford to pay their travel expenses.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union it was Russia who took over the role of a dominating favourite. The domination continued in the 90s, but already in this century there hasn't been a single country that could be singled out as a clear favourite. This Olympiad wasn't an exception, as the usual suspects of USA, India, and China considered the main favourites, with last-time winners Uzbekistan, Armenia, Germany, England, The Netherlands and Norway (led by Carlsen) expected to have a chance.

In a way, this prediction turned out to be true. What wasn't expected, was the way the Olympiad was won by the winning team.

## THE BRITISH

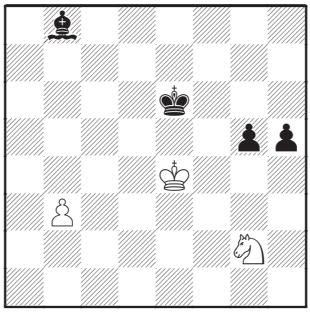
There were three teams from the British Isles - England, Scotland and Wales. England fielded a strong line-up, consisting of Vitiugov, Howell, Adams, McShane and Jones, the top five active players on the national rating list. However, it turned out none of them was in a particularly good form - experience has shown that at least one, preferably two or more, players should have a good tournament if the team is to score a good result.

Still, England started well and won the first two matches. These wins were followed by two draws, against the strong teams of Denmark and Georgia. The match against Georgia saw David Howell do what David Howell does best.

**Nikolozi Kacharava - David Howell**

45th Olympiad 2024 Budapest HUN (4.10)

The situation on the scoreboard required Howell to win the game to draw the match. He was patiently milking a "completely" drawn endgame for more than 70 moves and now he finally gets his chance.



**105.♔f3?** The losing move.

105.b4 was the only move to draw. After 105...g4 106.b5 ♔f6 107.♘h4 ♗g3

*(107...♔g5 108.♘f3+! is the trick, as Black cannot afford losing the g-pawn, when he's left with a bishop of the wrong colour.)* 108.♘f5 ♗e1 109.b6 we see the difference with the game - the b-pawn is far advanced and Black cannot concentrate on pushing his own kingside pawns.

**105...g4+ 106.♔e4 ♔f6** White lost two tempi with the king, and now Black wins.

**107.♘h4 ♗g3 108.♘f5 ♗e1!** Stopping the advance of the b-pawn.

**109.♘d4 h4 110.♘f3** Now the trick doesn't work as the bishop is perfectly placed to stop the white king from approaching the corner.

**110...gxf3 111.♔xf3 h3 112.b4 ♔e6 113. b5 ♔d6** Simply collecting the b-pawn as White is helpless and will eventually have to move the king to allow the h-pawn to promote.

**0-1**

The win against Italy in round six saw perhaps the best creative effort by an English player at the Olympiad.

## Luca Jr **Moroni** - Luke **McShane**

45th Olympiad 2024 Budapest HUN (6.7)

**1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♘f3 b6 5.e3 ♗b7** Bobby Fischer didn't play the Queen's Indian, but in the 70s the fianchetto of the light-squared bishop was his favourite line against the Rubinstein variation of the Nimzo-Indian.

**6.♗d3 0-0 7.0-0 c5** This is the modern treatment, together with 7...d5.

7...♗xc3 8.bxc3 ♗e4 was Fischer's preferred way, clearly more "Nimzowitschian" in spirit. The engine also likes it. 9.♗e2 *(9.♕c2 ♗xd3 Fischer criticised this move in "My 60 Memorable Games" and suggested 9...♗xf3 10.gxf3 c5 with unclear play, something that yours truly has successfully tried. The engine doesn't think the move is bad, though. 10.♕xd3 d6?! only here the engine prefers 10...d5. 11.e4 and White was better and won in: 1-0 (61) Reshevsky,S-Fischer,R New York 1965)* 9...c5 10.♘d2 ♗g6 11.♗f3 ♘c6 with good play for Black in the game: ½-½ (41) Reshevsky,S-Fischer,R Buenos Aires 1970

David Howell
*Photo: Maria Emelianova*

**8.♘a4** Threatening a3 without allowing ...♗xc3.

**8...cxd4 9.exd4 ♖e8 10.a3 ♗f8 11.b4 a5** Black fixes the queenside structure immediately. The alternative is to keep this option for later with 11...d6.

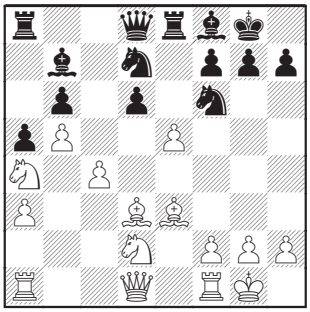
**12.b5 d6 13.♗e3 ♘bd7 14.♘d2** The maneuver ♘d2-b3 is recommended by the engine, but before the development of the bishop to e3 because in that case the bishop can be developed to f4, to discourage the ...e5 break.

**14...e5** McShane prefers a different structure.

14...d5 was quite good. White cannot play 15.c5?! because of the position of the

bishops on e3 and d3, something Black can take advantage of after 15...bxc5 16.dxc5 d4! 17.♗xd4 ♘xc5 and both bishops are exposed on the d-file.

**15.dxe5**



15.d5!? is what the engine likes, giving White a solid plus, but to a human this just looks like a "clear pawn up" on the kingside as White has crippled his queenside majority by allowing Black absolute control of the c5-square. However, things are not that simple in view of the very surprising plan that White has at his disposal after something like 15...♗c8 16.♕f3 g6 17.♖ae1 ♘h5 18.g4 when it is White who starts play on the kingside! *(Objectively it's better not to allow Black's next with a preparatory move like 18.h3 or 18.♔h1, when White will keep this advance in reserve.)* In order not to be suffocated Black needs to sacrifice a pawn now with 18...e4! 19.♗xe4 ♘e5 20.♕g2 ♘xg4 21.♗xb6 ♕g5 with messy play.

**15...♖xe5** Black has good compensation for the isolated pawn on d6 in view of his well-placed light pieces.

**16.♘b3?!** The centre is open, so this maneuver is not appropriate now.

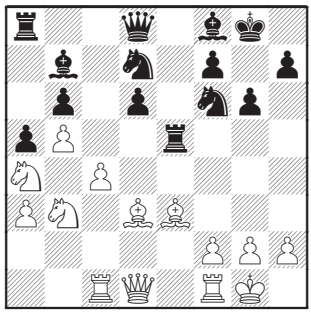
16.♗d4 ♖e8 17.♕c2 d5 and Black gets rid of the isolated pawn, with equal play.

**16...g6** McShane chooses a more positional approach.

16...d5! was stronger, opening the position when Black's pieces are better placed. White cannot take on d5 as after 17.cxd5? ♘xd5 18.♗d2 ♕h4 Black has a winning initiative.

**17.♖c1?!** Allowing Black's next, which is surprising as it is a common motif in similar positions.

17.♕d2 was better, though Black already has a slight pull after 17...♘e4 18.♗xe4 ♗xe4.



**17...♖xe3!** Black knows the classics! Ulf Andersson famously sacrificed his rook for White's dark-squared bishop on e3 against both Karpov and Kasparov, beating the former and drawing the latter. This exchange sacrifice is also known from some lines of the Benoni and the King's Indian.

**18.fxe3 ♗h6** Black gets excellent compensation thanks to his control of the dark squares.

**19.♔h1 ♘e5 20.♗e2 ♘e4** In a few moves Black significantly improved the activity of his pieces.

**21.♗f3 ♗xe3 22.♗xe4 ♗xe4 23.♕e2** White is willing to return the exchange only to decrease Black's attacking potential.

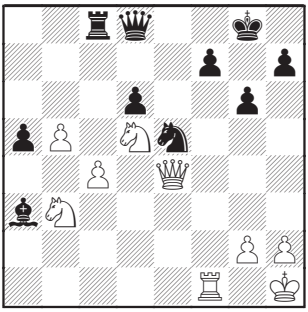
**23...♗xc1?!** McShane succumbs to the temptation to regain the material.

23...♕g5! was much stronger. After 24.♖cd1 ♖e8 White's knights are offside

and Black's concentration of the pieces in the centre is imposing.

**24.♕xe4 ♗xa3 25.♘xb6! ♖b8 26.♘d5** White successfully managed to transfer his knight on the rim to the beautiful central square on d5 and now doesn't risk losing.

**26...♖c8** Removing the king from g8 would have avoided annoying checks from e7 or f6. However, this wasn't a blunder by McShane, in view of White's next, it's more likely that both players missed White's hidden resource on move 30 that refutes Black's idea.



**27.♘xa5! ♕xa5!** The second exchange sacrifice in the game, McShane's spirit in this game is worth of admiration.

**28.♘e7+ ♔g7 29.♘xc8 ♕c7** The knight is trapped, but White had a powerful continuation at his disposal.

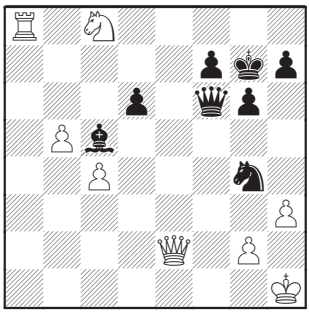
**30.♖a1?** 30.b6! would have refuted Black's inspiring play. After 30...♕xc8 31.b7 ♕e8 32.♖b1 Black's scattered pieces cannot control the passed pawn on b7. Black is lost after 32...d5 *(32...♕b8 33.♖a1 is even worse as the bishop cannot leave a3 in view of ♖a8.)* 33.♕xd5 ♘c6 34.c5.

**30...♗c5 31.♖a8 ♕d8** Black is back in the game and with this move he wants to include the queen in the attack on the kingside, which is devoid of any white pieces, which are stuck on the queenside.

**32.h3** Possible, but now Black's attack starts gaining force.

32.♘xd6!? was a curious way to force an exchange of queens after 32...♕xd6 33.♕d5 ♘xc4 34.♕xd6 ♘xd6 35.♖a6 with a likely draw, as the passed b-pawn will keep Black occupied on the queenside.

**32...♕f6 33.♕e2 ♘g4!** Suddenly Black's pieces are dancing around the white king.



**34.♘e7!** White finds the only move to stay in the game.

**34...♘f2+ 35.♔h2 ♕f4+ 36.g3 ♕c1 37.♕f3 ♘d3!** Threatening mate with ...♕g1.

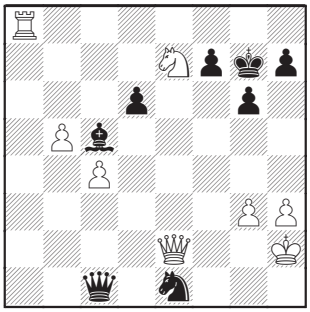
**38.♕g2?** Natural, but it should have lost.

38.♕h1! defending with tempo was better. After 38...♕d2+ 39.♕g2 ♕d1 40.♖a2 White is suffering, but he should draw after *(40.♕h1? ♕e2+ 41.♕g2 ♕xe7 loses the knight.)* 40...♘e5 41.♖f2! ♗xf2 42.♕xf2 ♘xc4 43.♘c8 when the b-pawn will likely be exchanged for Black's pawn on d6, leading to a drawn endgame of 3 vs 2 on the same wing.

**38...♘e1?** Natural again, but it allows White a difficult-to-see saving chance.

38...h5! was winning as White can barely move. The idea is to free the h7-square for the king, handy in case of a check from g8.

**39.♕e2?**



The final mistake.

39.♖g8+! led to a draw. 39...♔h6 40.♕e4! and Black doesn't have anything more than a perpetual after 40...♘f3+ 41.♔g2 ♕g1+ 42.♔xf3 ♕h1+ 43.♔f4 ♕f1+ 44.♔g4 ♕d1+.

**39...♘f3+!** Now this wins.

**40.♔g2 ♘e1+** Repeating to make move 40.

**41.♔h2 ♘f3+ 42.♔g2 ♘g5!** White is mated or loses too much material. In spite of the inaccuracies, a beautiful creative effort by McShane.

**0-1**

In round seven England suffered the first loss. Vitiugov uncharacteristically misevaluated a possible exchange of his bishop for a knight in a early symmetricalendgame and made the wrong choice. Since the other three players drew, Armenia was the first team to inflict a loss on the English. Thanks to a Michael Adams win, in the next round England beat Lithuania and returned to the fight for the top spots. A draw against Vietnam followed, a win for Jones and a loss for McShane.

To do well in an Olympiad, a team should do well in the last two rounds. Unfortunately, the penultimate round saw England suffer their second defeat, this time at the hands of the French. Vachier beat Vitiugov from a drawn rook endgame while Fressinet was better in a complicated fight against Jones. McShane's 113-move win over Maurizzi could only serve as a small comfort for a minimal loss. Still, last-rounds 3-1 win over Slovakia, wins by Vitiugov and Howell, gave England a strong finish and a share of 14th place (20th on tie-breaks) with 15 points. England won six matches, drew three and lost two.

It's indicative that all players except Adams (who won 0.8 points) lost rating points: Vitiugov lost 8.9, Howell lost 4, McShane lost 1.8 and Jones lost 7.3. This indicates that the team was lacking players in good form, and taking this into consideration then the final result is in fact not bad at all.

Scotland won six matches and lost five, an uncompromising Olympiad for the team. They shared 57th place, 73rd on tie-break, and in view of their starting rank of 69, the result is approximately an expected one. 14-year-old Frederick Gordon continues to improve: playing on board three he scored 5.5 out of 10 and gained 17.6 rating points, beating two grandmasters in the process.

Wales scored 11 points, winning 5 matches, losing 5 matches and drawing one. They shared 82nd place, 94th on tie-break.

## THE INDIAN WONDER

The Indian team came to Budapest still feeling the disappointment from two years ago, when in their home country they missed a gold medal when Gukesh blundered in a drawn endgame against Abdusattorov. They were determined not to repeat the same mistake this time.

Two years is a long time for a chess player, especially if he or she is a young one. The young ones from Chennai became Candidates in the meantime and the Indian team had three of them (Gukesh, Praggnanandhaa and Vidit), one player who

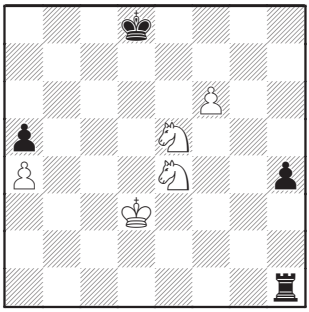
was ranked fourth in the world (Erigaisi) and a former top-10 player (Harikrishna).

They started by winning their first eight (!) matches, with their board one, Gukesh, winning his first four games and Erigaisi winning his first six games. They won 10 matches out of 11.

The Challenger showed fantastic level of play, similar to the one he demonstrated at the Candidates. His final score of 9/10 on board one, with a performance rating of 3056 and a gain of 30 (!) rating points was incredible and included wins over top-10 players like Wei Yi and Caruana. This result brought Gukesh a gold medal on board one. His perseverance against the former brought India the win in the crucial match with China in round seven.

## **Gukesh** D – **Wei** Yi

45th Olympiad 2024 Budapest HUN (7.1)



The endgame was drawn for a long time, but Gukesh kept looking for chances. Now the position became sharp and with little time on the clock it was hard for Wei Yi to find the narrow path to a draw.

**71...h3?** The losing mistake. It's hard to blame Wei Yi, because the drawing line was impossible to see.

71...♖d1+! is the only move. The hard part was to understand that after 72.♔c4 h3 73.f7 ♖c1+! *(again strictly the only move!)* 74.♔d3 *(74.♔b5 ♖f1!* and Black draws.*)* 74...♔e7! 75.♘g5 h2 76.♘g6+ ♔d7 77.f8♕ h1♕ White has the move and a queen and two knights around Black's lone king, but there is no mate.

Gukesh and Wei Yi
*Photo: Michal Walusza*

**72.f7** ♖**f1** 72...♔e7 also loses to 73.♘g5 ♖d1+ 74.♔c4 ♖c1+ 75.♔b5! this makes all the difference compared to the saving line above, where it didn't work. 75...h2 *(75...♖f1 76.♘g6+ ♔d6 77.f8♕+ ♖xf8 78.♘xf8 h2 79.♘e4+ and White is right on time to stop the h-pawn.)* 76.♘g6+ ♔d7 77.f8♕ h1♕ 78.♘e5+ now this leads to mate, as the king on b5 takes away squares from the black one.

**73.♘g5 h2 74.♘gf3** White blocks the f-file and threatens to promote with check.

**74...♔e7** 74...h1♕ 75.f8♕+ ♔c7 76.♕e7+ ♔b6 77.♘c4+ leads to mate.

**75.♘xh2** The rest is simple as Black cannot stop the f7-pawn from promoting without giving up his rook for it.

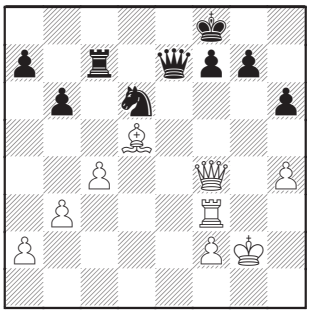
**75...♖a1 76.♘hg4 ♖a3+ 77.♔d2 ♖xa4 78.♘h6 ♖a2+ 79.♔e3 ♖a3+ 80.♔e4** Black cannot stop ♘g6 as 80...♖g3 runs into 81.♘f5.

**1-0**

The victory against the closest competitors inspired the team and they beat Iran in the next round. The only match they didn't win was against the winners of the last Olympiad, Uzbekistan. There was no drama this time in the game Gukesh-Abdusattorov, as it was a calm affair and drawn in 32 moves. However, they had one chance in that match as well.

## Arjun **Erigaisi** - Shamsiddin **Vokhidov**

45th Olympiad 2024 Budapest HUN (9.1)



White has a stable advantage thanks to the superior activity of his pieces. With the other boards clearly drawn, it was obvious that only India could win the match. And suddenly, they got an unexpected chance.

**37...♘e8?** Keeping still with 37...♔g8 was better. White will press with 38.♖e3 ♕d7 39.b4 but if Black suffers long enough without cracking under the pressure, he should be able to make a draw.

**38.♖e3?** Missing the golden opportunity. Admittedly, the tactic is not obvious.

38.♗xf7! ♕xf7 39.♕d4! wins for White. The point is that after 39...♘f6 40.♕d8+ picks up the rook on c7 or wins the queen after 40...♘e8 41.♖xf7+ ♖xf7 42.a4 with a technically winning position.

**38...♕d8** The crisis passed and Black managed to draw.

**½-½**

The missed chance didn't disappoint the Indian team. In the penultimate round they beat another direct competitor, the team of USA. Critical for the win was Gukesh's victory over Caruana on board one.

## **Gukesh** D - Fabiano **Caruana**

45th Olympiad 2024 Budapest HUN (10.1)

**1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 d5 4.♗g2 ♘c6** A peculiar move-order, but Caruana had an idea in his mind.

**5.♘f3 ♖b8!?** A novelty in the Catalan on move 5! You would be forgiven to think so, but the move was first played in 1995 and has already been tested in several computer games in recent times. It is one of the engine's top choices in the position.

**6.cxd5** Gukesh was surprised by Caruana's choice and chooses a safe continuation, avoiding lines where White sacrifices the pawn on c4.

**6...♗b4+!** An indication that Caruana had also looked at Gukesh's choice, which isn't among the top ones of the engine. The recapture on d5 is also fine, but giving the check is more precise.

**7.♘c3 exd5** With no development problems Black is already fine. Great success in the opening for Caruana, but the game goes on.

**8.♗g5 h6 9.♗xf6 ♕xf6 10.0-0** 10.♕b3 ♘xd4! allows Black to simplify the position in the centre;

10.♖c1 avoids the necessity to recapture on c3 with a pawn. Still, Black is fine after 10...0-0 11.0-0 ♗xc3 12.♖xc3 ♗g4 when after ...♘e7 and ...c6 Black will be comfortable in the Carlsbad structure. The point is that after 13.e3 ♘e7 14.♖xc7? ♘c6 the rook is trapped on c7.

**10...♗xc3** The pawn on d5 was hanging, so Black eliminates the knight and completes development in the next few moves.

**11.bxc3 0-0 12.♘d2** The only active plan for White is to push e4 or c4.

**12...♘e7** It's possible that Caruana didn't explore deeply this branch of his analysis.

The computer indicates 12...♗e6!? as more precise, as keeping the knight on c6 has benefits if Black can manage ...♘a5-c4, especially in connection with ...b5.

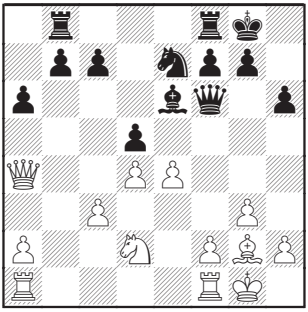
**13.e3** For now, White keeps both options of e4 and c4 open.

13.♕a4 a6 14.e4 was more direct. 14...dxe4 15.♘xe4 ♕c6 and Black should be fine, though White is a bit more active.

**13...♗e6** Caruana stops c4.

13...b6!? with the idea to develop the bishop on a6 was an alternative.

**14.♕a4 a6 15.e4** Since c4 is not an option, White advances with the other central pawn.



**15...c5?!** A sharp, but unnecessary decision.

The simple 15...dxe4 16.♘xe4 ♕g6 was perfectly safe for Black, without any need to calculate complex lines.

**16.♕a3!** White now puts pressure on Black's centre.

**16...b6 17.♖ab1** 17.♕xa6?! cxd4 18.cxd4 ♕xd4 is good for Black, who exchanged his a-pawn for White's central d-pawn.

**17...♖fe8** Black defends the knight on e7 as it can become vulnerable if the queen is to leave its defence from the f6-square.

**18.dxc5** 18.e5 ♕f5 is unclear. Taking the pawn on a6 again gives Black counterplay after 19.♕xa6 cxd4 20.cxd4 ♖a8 21.♕xb6 ♖xa2

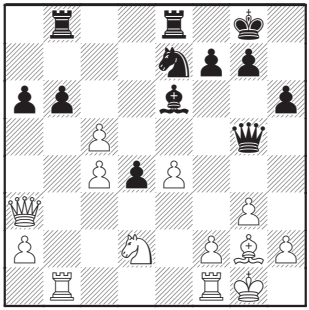
**18...d4?!** Caruana plays sharply.

18...bxc5 was fine for Black. After 19.♖xb8 ♖xb8 20.♕xc5 ♖b2 Black has counterplay for the pawn.

**19.c4?!** Gukesh wants to stabilise the position in the centre, but this is not the best decision.

19.♖xb6 dxc3 20.♘b3 was better. White controls the pawn on c3 and has firm protection of his own passed pawn on c5. 20...♖bd8 21.♕b4 and Black's compensation is questionable.

**19...♕g5!**



This double attack on the knight on d2 and the pawn on c5 allows Black to equalise.

**20.♖fd1 bxc5** 20...♕xc5 was a safer alternative as 21.♕xa6 d3 the knight is coming to c6 and then either e5 or d4, with sufficient counterplay.

**21.f4** White uses the queen's position to gain space on the kingside. Play becomes forcing now.

Caruana and Gukesh
*Photo: Maria Emelianova*

**21...♕h5 22.f5 ♖xb1 23.♖xb1 ♕e2!** The only way to stay in the game.

**24.fxe6 ♕xd2 25.exf7+ ♔xf7 26.♕xc5** Threatening ♕h5 and ♖f1, so Black must move the king.

**26...♔g8 27.♖f1 ♔h7 28.♕e5 ♕e3+ 29.♔h1 d3** Black's passed pawn gives him enough compensation for the pawn, but the position remains very sharp.

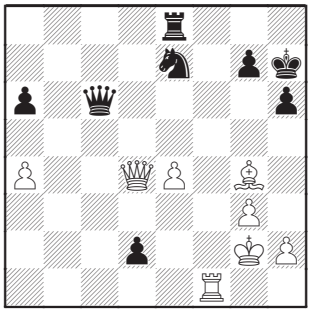
**30.♗h3** White activates the bishop.

**30...d2 31.♗g4 ♕d3** The human way.

Black had a tremendous resource after 31...♖d8! 32.♕xe7 d1♕ 33.♖xd1 *(or 33.♗xd1 ♖xd1! 34.♖xd1 ♕f3+ picking up the rook on d1 with check and a draw.)* 33...♖xd1+ 34.♗xd1 ♕f2! this is a pretty idea. White cannot avoid losing the bishop with check. *(34...♕e1+ is the more human move and it also works: 35.♔g2 ♕xd1 and the queen endgame should be drawn in spite of Black being two pawns down, but this is not immediately obvious.)* 35.h4 ♕f1+ 36.♔h2 ♕f2+! 37.♔h3 ♕f1+ to avoid draw White must play 38.♔g4 ♕xd1+ 39.♔f4 but after 39...♕f1+ 40.♔e5 ♕xc4 Black should draw as the exposed king on e5 and the attack on the pawn on a2 gives enough counterplay to save Black.

**32.♔g2 ♕xc4 33.a4 ♕c6** Black regained the pawn and the position is finely balanced.

**34.♕d4**



**34...♕g6?** Immediately after restoring material parity, Caruana makes the decisive error. It was high time to start playing with the other pieces, not just the queen. Black's last developing move was 17...♖fe8, which was 17 moves ago!

34...♘g6 was natural, improving the position of the knight as it aims for the beautiful e5-square. Caruana may have been worried about the pin after 35.♗f5 but Black has more than one way of dealing with it. 35...♔h8 this appears to be the simplest. Black gives up the pawn on d2 but after *(35...♕c2 is the more energetic way, not giving up the pawn on d2. 36.♔h3 ♕c1 37.♕f2 ♖e5 with a tense position.)* 36.♕xd2 ♘e5 his untouchable blockading knight on e5 ensures against any danger;

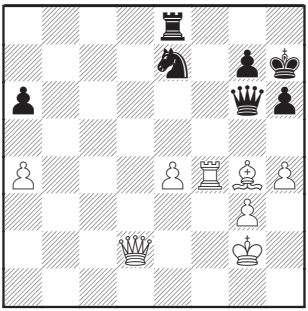
34...♘g8 was another way to improve the knight's position. 35.♗f5+ ♔h8 36.♕xd2 ♕xa4 is fine for Black.

**35.♖f4!** Domination - the rook secures the e4-pawn and defends the bishop on g4. Black's pieces are awfully uncoordinated.

**35...♕g5 36.h4** Forcing the queen back.

**36...♕g6** 36...♕a5 defends the pawn on d2, but loses to 37.♖f7 and the mate on g7 can only be defended by losing the knight after 37...♖g8 38.♖xe7.

**37.♕xd2**



This time Black is a pawn down with no compensation at all. His pieces are still very constrained and Caruana finally tries to improve them, but it's already too late.

**37...♖b8 38.♕d7 h5 39.♗e6 ♖b6 40.♗f7** Forcing the exchange of queens and winning another pawn in the process.

**40...♕d6 41.♕xd6 ♖xd6 42.♗xh5** Two pawns up is more than enough.

**42...♘c6 43.♗e2 a5 44.♗b5 ♘e5 45.♖f5 ♖e6 46.♔f2**

**1-0**

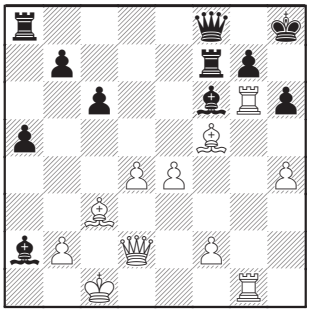
On board three Erigaisi beat Dominguez and Praggnanandhaa's loss to So on board two was the only loss by the Indian players in the whole Olympiad!

The other stellar performer in the Indian team was Erigaisi, scoring 10/11 and a performance rating of 2968, 19.2 rating points won, which brought him less than three points shy of 2800 on the live rating list. Erigaisi played on board three because the Indian team hoped that his experience of playing open events would be very helpful in beating somewhat lower-rated opponents on a lower board. They were spot on. Erigaisi won gold medal on board three.

The above example of a missed chance against Vokhidov was a rare exception to the rule that Erigaisi is very exact in his calculations. Here's a beautiful combination from round three.

Arjun **Erigaisi** - Peter2 **Prohaszka**

45th Olympiad 2024 Budapest HUN (3.3)



White is obviously winning with the heavy concentration of all his forces on the kingside. Erigaisi's way brings an aesthetic satisfaction.

**28.d5! cxd5 29.e5!** The pawn marches all the way to e7, getting rid of Black's defenders along the way.

**29...♗xh4 30.e6** First the rooks is forced to abandon the seventh rank.

**30...♖f6 31.e7!** Now the queen is forced to abandon the defence of the pawn on h6.

**31...♕xe7** The pawn fell, but its sacrifice allowed.

**32.♕xh6+!!** This spectacular queen sacrifice became possible only thanks to the march and sacrifice of the pawn on the e-file.

**32...gxh6 33.♖xh6+ ♕h7 34.♖xh7#**

**1-0**

Vidit was excellent on board four, scoring 7.5 out of 10 and winning six rating points. Reserve player Harikrishna was used only three times, scoring 2.5 points. The only player to lose rating (3.7 points) was Praggnanandhaa on board two, but that was mostly due to his loss to So in the penultimate round, as otherwise his 6 out of 10 on board was another good result.

India's domination in both competitions, open and women, could be a start of a new, Soviet-like domination in chess. The last country to win double gold was China in 2018 and they still hold the titles of individual World Champion, though that may soon change.

## THE CHALLENGER AND THE CHAMPION

The look of the two players soon to face each other in Singapore could not be any different.

Gukesh remained composed and focused, playing with great energy and confidence. His resilience and stamina were exemplary, as shown in the above examples: seeking chances in a drawn endgame against Wei Yi and prevailing in 80 moves showed his stamina and putting pressure on Caruana and forcing him to make a mistake when it seemed that draw was around the corner showed that he can beat the best players in a way similar to Carlsen's. His play doesn't seem to have weaknesses and he will only get better.

The Champion continued to be a shadow of his former self. The problems I have pointed out in my previous articles where I analysed his play remained the same. The lack of confidence is apparent in his play, he cannot stand prolonged tension and blunders when it happens.

He started with four draws in a row, without realistic winning chances in any of them, before losing to Le Quang Liem. The loss was painful, as it happened from a "dead drawn" endgame.

The next day China faced India and the whole world was anticipating the game on board one Gukesh-Ding Liren.

Instead, Ding Liren missed that and the next game. And as we saw above, Gukesh beat Wei Yi to give India the vital victory.

Ding Liren
*Photo: Michal Walusza*

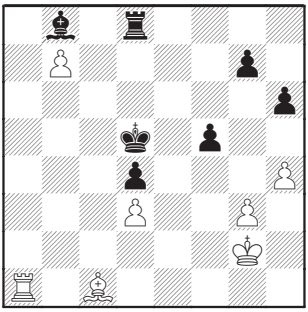
Gukesh
*Photo: Mark Livshitz*

Failure to appear for the most critical game in the whole tournament was widely considered as a major psychological loss for Ding Liren. The public saw this "cowardice" as a major show of lack of confidence, but perhaps Ding Liren was being pragmatic in trying to limit the damage before the match - playing after a loss and in sub-optimal state of mind, leading to a loss to the Challenger would have made things even worse in every respect.

After the two rest days Ding Liren returned to the board and made three more draws. In the last round he made a 10-move draw with Caruana, while the other two were the following.

## **Ding** Liren- Parham **Maghsoodloo**

45th Olympiad 2024 Budapest HUN (9.3)



Ding played well and obtained a winning position against a very strong opponent.

**39.♖a5+??** Wrong evaluation, most likely as a result of a miscalculation.

White had to keep the b7-pawn for long enough in order to fix Black's kingside pawns. With this idea, he could also have started with 39.h5. 39.♔f3! ♔c6 40.♖b1 ♖d7 41.h5! The key idea - White cannot keep the pawn on b7, but a bishop or pawn endgame is winning for him thanks to the weakness of the g7 and h6 pawns. 41...♖xb7 42.♖xb7 ♔xb7 43.♗f4! ♗a7 44.♗e5 and

Ding and Maghsoodloo
*Photo: Michal Walusza*

White wins by simply collecting Black's kingside pawns.

**39...♔c6 40.♖xf5 ♖d7!** Black defends the seventh rank and collects the pawn on b7, thus saving the game.

**41.♗f4 ♖xb7 42.♗xb8 ♖xb8 43.♖f7 g5 44.♖f6+ ♔c5 45.h5 ♖b3 46.♖xh6 ♖xd3** With a drawn rook endgame. Draw was agreed on move 60.

**½-½**

## Nodirbek **Abdusattorov – Ding** Liren

45th Olympiad 2024 Budapest HUN (10.3)

**1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e3 c5 4.dxc5** Abdusattorov uses a similar strategy to what Firouzja has used against Ding - enter a complex position and wait for him to blunder. See the September issue of BCM for the details.

**4...e6** If Black doesn't want to enter the ensuing positions then he can play 4...a5.

**5.b4 a5 6.c3 axb4 7.cxb4 b6 8.♗b5+ ♗d7 9.♗xd7+ ♘bxd7 10.a4 bxc5 11.b5 ♗d6 12.♗b2 g5!?** All this is well-known theory and Black's last move is indicative

of Ding's willingness to enter sharper positions. The alternative is to castle short.

**13.g3?!** A dubious new move played fast. The theoretical move is 13.♕e2.

**13...g4 14.♘h4** In this moment I approached the board where this game was played. My eyes fell on Ding. He had spent quite some time by this point and looked tense. The muscles on his arms were visibly contracting, both the forearm and the biceps. He couldn't sit still. Then he made his next move in a rushed and nervous motion.

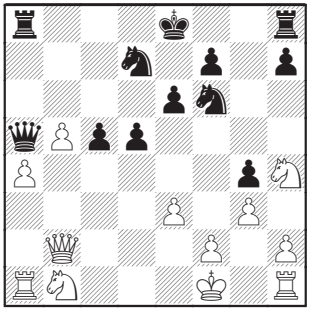
**14...♗e5!** A good move, neutralising the strong bishop on b2.

**15.♕c2?** Quite the opposite of Ding's appearance, Abdusattorov was looking his usual self, exuding god-like confidence and looking at his opponent as if wondering why he hadn't resigned yet. He made this move quickly and confidently. It is a losing mistake.

15.♗xe5 ♘xe5 16.0-0 was better, but Black has very good chances after 16...0-0 17.♘c3 ♕a5 as White's pawns are going nowhere while Black can expand after ...♘fd7 and ...f5.

**15...♕a5+! 16.♔f1 ♗xb2** 16...♘e4 was equally strong, after 17.♔g2 ♔e7 White can barely move.

**17.♕xb2**



**17...♕b4** Ding opts for a winning endgame.

**18.♕xb4 cxb4 19.♘d2 ♔e7 20.h3** White tries to exchange the pawn on g4, which is controlling the f3-square, thus making the knight on h4 really dim.

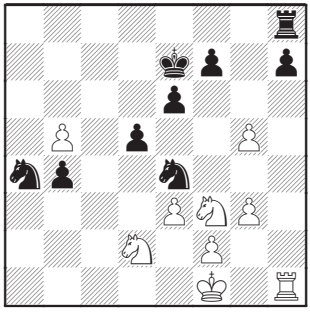
**20...♘c5** This is good enough.

20...♘e4 this centralising move was again (like on move 16) very strong. After 21.♘xe4 dxe4 now the e4-pawn controls the f3-square and doesn't allow the return of the knight on h4. After 22.hxg4 ♖hc8 Black's pieces will overwhelm the queenside and the passed b-pawn should decide the game.

**21.hxg4 ♖xa4?** This move lets White back into the game.

21...b3! was stronger, threatening ...b2 and ...♘xa4. 22.♔g2 b2 23.♖a2 ♘xa4 24.g5 ♘e4 25.♘hf3 ♖hb8 and Black has excellent winning chances.

**22.♖xa4 ♘xa4 23.g5 ♘e4 24.♘hf3**



This is the difference, now the knight returns to the game and this gives White saving chances.

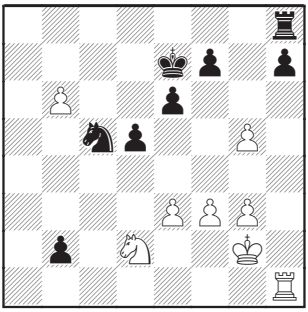
**24...♘ac5 25.♔g2 b3 26.b6?** A rushed decision that should have lost the game for White.

26.♖b1 was the simplest, getting rid of the dangerous b3-pawn. After 26...♖b8 27.♘xe4 dxe4 28.♘d4 the threats are ♘c6 and ♘xb3,

so the game fizzles out to a draw: 28...♖b6 29.♘xb3 ♖xb5 30.♘d2 ♖xb1 31.♘xb1.

**26...♘xd2 27.♘xd2 b2** The pawn is alive and Black is winning, but...

**28.f3**



**28...♘a4??** An awful blunder, giving up the pawn on b2 he just managed to save.

28...♖b8 is the most straight-forward, but the following line is tricky to calculate: 29.♖xh7 ♖xb6 30.g6 ♔f6 31.g7! ♖b8 32.♖h8 b1♕ 33.♘xb1 ♖b2+ 34.♔h3 ♔xg7 35.♖c8 ♘d3 36.♘a3 *(36.♘c3? ♖c2 loses because of the pin on the c-file.)* 36...♘e1 and with the stranded knight on a3 Black keeps good practical chances;

28...♖c8! is the move the engine sees as best. Now after 29.♖xh7 *(29.♔f2 ♖c6 picks up the pawn on b6 and places the rook behind the passed pawn on b2.)* 29...♘d7! the threat is ...♖c2 and Black wins after 30.g6 ♖c2; 28...♖a8! threatening ...♖a1 should win, too. After 29.♘b1 ♖a1 30.♔f2 ♔f8! 31.♔e2 ♔g7 32.♔d2 ♖a6 33.♔c2 ♖xb6 Black is a clear pawn up with a technically winning position.

**29.♖h4! ♘xb6 30.♖b4** A simple double attack that eliminates the pawn on b2.

**30...♘d7 31.♖xb2 h6 32.gxh6 ♖xh6 33.♖b7 e5 34.f4 ♖b6**

**½-½**

The only positive for Ding is that he managed to obtain winning positions against these strong players, but the fact that he badly misplayed them signifies that he doesn't have the steely resolve to wrap the game up. This often happens because the player lacks the inner calmness to steer the game to the logical conclusion without rushing. In the two examples from Ding's games above we saw rushed decision that spoiled everything.

If both players play in the same way they played in Budapest, the match will be a demolition job, not only in the final score, but also in the level of play. In my opinion, Ding will play better in Singapore, but that improved level will have to be very high in order to be sufficient to play on equal terms with Gukesh.

## THE OTHER TEAMS

Previous Olympic champions Uzbekistan were coached by Vladimir Kramnik and were rightly considered contenders for the top spots. As it turned out, nobody could match India's winning rate, so the young Uzbeks had to fight for second place. They had two exceptional players in the team, their first board Abdusattorov, who scored 9 out of 11 and won silver medal on board one, and their fourth board Vokhidov, who scored 8 out of 10 and won gold medal on his board. They won eight matches, lost two and drew one, the same score as the teams of USA, China, Serbia and Armenia.

The tie-breaks were in favour of USA and Uzbekistan, who won silver and bronze, respectively.

Team USA started well, especially their leader Caruana, who went on 4/4, but then made four draws in a row before losing to Gukesh and drawing in 10 moves with Ding Liren. Levon Aronian on board four was their star player, scoring 8 out of 10 and winning silver on board four. However, things could have been different if his game in round one followed its logical course.

The U.S. top boards, Dominguez and Aronian, enjoying the event
*Photo: Maria Emelianova*

## Andre **Mendez Machado** - Levon **Aronian**

45th Olympiad 2024 Budapest HUN (1.1)

**1.e4 c5** Aronian has always been a 1...e5 player, but recently he's widened his opening repertoire. Playing against a player who is 600 rating points lower-rated than him, he goes for a sharper opening.

**2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘f6** This system came back to the limelight after Caruana's successful use of it at the Candidates in Toronto.

**4.♘c3 g6** In the game against Firouzja in Toronto Caruana played 4...♘d4, but he used 4...g6 in more than one occasion ever since. The move 4...♕c7 was very popular in the late 90s and early 00s. Caruana and Aronian have worked together, so it's likely they have looked at this line in their preparations.

**5.e5 ♘h5** Caruana's choice, though 5...♘g4 is the more popular choice.

**6.♗xc6 dxc6 7.0-0 ♘g7 8.d3 h6** Aronian deviates from the move Caruana played.

8...♘e6 9.♗e3 ♗g7 was played in the game: 1-0 (51) Firouzja,A (2744)-Caruana,F (2796) chess.com INT 2024

**9.♘e4 b6 10.♖e1 ♘f5?!** The knight will turn out to be without purpose after White's next move. Additionally, it can be attacked by g4, so it was better to place it on e6.

**11.c3 g5?!** Aronian plays with aplomb, but the quality is not very high.

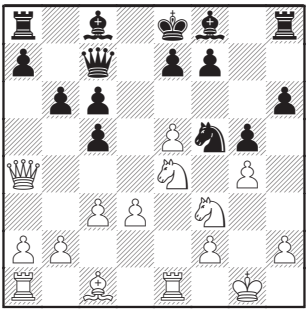
**12.♕a4 ♕c7?** If up to this point Black's moves were loose, this one is outright bad.

12...♗g7 was relatively best, though after 13.g4! *(13.♕xc6+ ♗d7 14.♕d5 g4 is unclear as Black gets compensation after*

*15.♘fd2 ♗e6 16.♕c6+ ♔f8!?)* 13...♘h4 14.♘xh4 gxh4 15.♘f6+ exf6 *(15...♔f8 16.♘h5 is also quite bad for Black.)* 16.♕xc6+ ♗d7 17.exf6+ ♔f8 18.♕d6+ ♔g8 19.fxg7 ♔xg7 20.h3 and White is close to winning;

12...♕d7 is somewhat better than the game move, but White is still close to winning after 13.h4! gxh4 *(13...g4? 14.♘f6+! exf6 15.exf6+ ♔d8 16.♘e5 is crushing.)* 14.e6! fxe6 15.♘e5 ♕d5 16.♗f4 is pretty sad for Black.

**13.g4!**



All of a sudden Black can resign. It's likely Aronian hasn't been lost in 13 moves ever since he was 8 years old (or younger).

**13...♕b7** From this moment onwards we see an elite player basically giving a piece odds and fighting for his life.

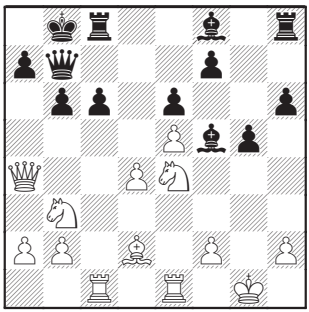
13...♘h4 14.♘xh4 gxh4 15.♘d6+ ♔d7 16.♘xf7 ♖g8 17.e6+ ♔e8 18.♕e4 is just awful;

13...♘g7 14.♘d6+ ♔d7 15.♘xf7 ♖h7 *(15...♖g8 16.♘xh6 ♖h8 17.♘f7 ♖g8 18.♘3xg5 is very sadistic.)* 16.♕e4 and the rook on h7 is trapped.

**14.gxf5 ♗xf5 15.d4** Black should resign, but it's curious to see how the game continues.

**15...♗g4 16.♘fd2 cxd4 17.♘b3 0-0-0 18.cxd4 ♔b8 19.♗d2 ♗d7 20.♕a3** 20.♘bc5 was quite strong, returning the piece for an attack. White does not only have an extra piece, but he also has the better position! 20...bxc5 21.♘xc5 ♕b5 trying to avoid a direct attack. 22.♕xb5+ cxb5 23.♗a5 and now White wins material again, as the rook cannot leave d8 since then the bishop on d7 is lost.

**20...♗f5 21.♖ac1 e6 22.♕a4 ♖c8**



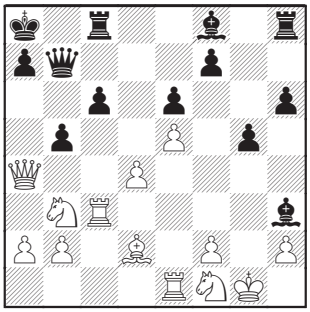
As the old Soviet anecdote goes, Black is a piece down, but that's why he has a worse position as compensation!

**23.♖c3 ♔a8 24.♘g3** There was no real need to remove the knight from the centralised position, but White wins anyway. However, this is the first step in a very strange direction...

**24...♗h3 25.♘f1** It's not quite clear what White wanted by moving the knight from e4 to f1, but this move suddenly gives Black a chance.

25.♘h5 made more sense, aiming for the f6-square. 25...♗f5 *(in case of 25...b5 like in the game, the fact that Black cannot take on f1 makes the big difference: 26.♘a5 bxa4 27.♘xb7 and White remains a piece up as the bishop on h3 hangs also after 27...♗g4 28.♘f6)* 26.♖ec1 and White should wrap up soon.

**25...b5!** Of course, Aronian takes the chance with both hands!



**26.♘a5?** Probably shocked, White allows Black back into the game.

26.♕a5 ♗b4! 27.♕xb4 c5 was what White wanted to avoid, with the threat of mate on g2 and an attack on the queen, but it was still the best chance. After 28.♖xh3 cxb4 29.♗xb4 White should still win, though this is a far cry from the safe and totally winning position with a clear piece up.

**26...bxa4 27.♘xb7 ♗xf1 28.♔xf1 ♔xb7** Now the endgame is equal. I'm sure you can imagine what happened next. Aronian won in 45 moves.

**0-1**

After such a lucky break, it wasn't a surprise that Aronian proceeded to play well and score a lot of points. Sometimes even the best need a little push at the beginning to get going.

Worth noting are the exceptional results by Serbia and Armenia. The Armenians habitually over-perform at Olympiads, even without Aronian they have remained competitive and capable of fighting for the top honours. The Serbians are the reigning European Team Champions, their team was massively improved with the arrival of Predke and Sarana, which inspired the other players as well. Velimir Ivic won bronze on board five, which is another testament of the upward trends in Serbian chess.

## MAGNUS CARLSEN

The former World Champion likes playing team events and he had a good Olympiad showing. He performed at 2810 (6 out of 8) and that cost him 1.2 rating points. The main culprit for this rating loss was his loss to Fedoseev, a player he has usually beaten in the past. To make this loss even more out of the ordinary, Carlsen lost from a symmetrical endgame with the white pieces.

Magnus **Carlsen** - Vladimir **Fedoseev**

45th Olympiad 2024 Budapest HUN (9.4)

**1.d4 d5 2.♘f3 c5!?** An interesting choice that eliminates the possibility of the London System.

**3.c4 cxd4** This line was popularised by Mamedyarov, who still plays it from time to time. It was also one of Nakamura's prepared lines for the Candidates in Toronto. The move 3...e6 would have led to the Tarrasch Defence of the QGD.

**4.cxd5 ♘f6 5.♘xd4** The queen capture on d4 is an alternative. Carlsen was surprised in the opening and spent some time pondering this move.

**5...♘xd5 6.e4 ♘f6 7.♗b5+ ♗d7 8.♘c3 e5 9.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 10.♘f5 ♕xd1+ 11.♔xd1 ♘c6 12.♗g5** The endgame is equal, but if anybody one would expect Carlsen to be the one squeezing something out of it.

**12...♘g4 13.♔e2 f6 14.♗h4 h5** After the game Fedoseev admitted that his analysis of this endgame was very deep, noting that he also knew about the rook maneuver along the fifth rank that happened later in the game.

**15.f3 ♘h6 16.♗f2 ♘xf5 17.exf5 0-0-0** The engine prefers 17...♖d8 to keep the king in the centre, but objectively both moves are fine.

**18.♖hd1 ♖xd1 19.♖xd1 h4!** This way of activating the rook is very good, though White still maintains somewhat better chances.

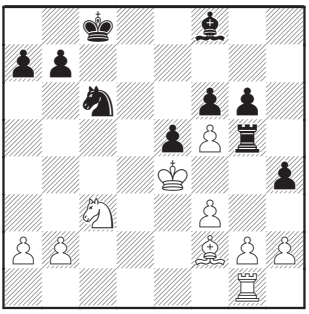
**20.♔d3** Carlsen centralises the king by sending it to e4 from where it defends the f5-pawn.

**20...♖h5 21.♔e4 ♖g5** The rook is active on g5, pinning White down to the defence of the pawns on f5 and g2. This gives Black good counterplay and compensation for White's control of the light squares in addition to the more active bishop, with Black's limited by its own pawns.

**22.♖g1** Carlsen leaves Black's pawn on h4 under attack.

22.g4 hxg3 23.hxg3 g6 is the same idea as in the game, to eliminate the space-grabbing pawn on f5.

**22...g6!**



Now a more concrete phase of the endgame begins. Black eliminates the f5-pawn but allows even further activation of the white king.

**23.♗xh4 gxf5+ 24.♔d5 ♖g6 25.♔e6** The king is very active and Black can easily lose if he's not careful.

**25...♗c5** 25...♘d4+ is an alternative. Play is forced now: 26.♔f7 ♖g7+! 27.♔e8 the only way to play for more. *(27.♔xf8 ♘e6+ 28.♔e8 ♘c7+ 29.♔f8 ♘e6+ leads to a repetition.)* 27...♘e6 28.♘d5 again playing for more. *(28.♗xf6 ♘c7+ 29.♔xf8 ♘e6+ is again a perpetual check.)* 28...♗c5 29.♖c1 ♖d7 with a completely messy position which the engine claims is totally equal after 30.♖xc5+ ♘xc5 31.♘e7+ ♔c7 32.♘xf5 and this is 0.00. Go figure.

Fedoseev better than Carlsen
*Photo: Michal Walusza*

**26.♖h1** White anticipates the loss of the pawn on g2 so he places the rook behind the passed h-pawn.

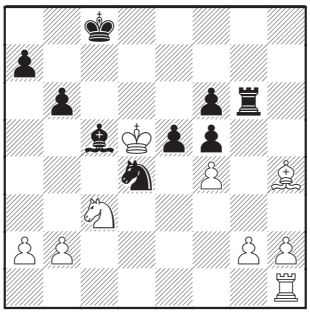
**26...♘d4+** 26...♖xg2 was an alternative, also leading to sharp play after 27.♗xf6 ♘d4+ 28.♔d5 *(28.♔xe5 ♘xf3+ 29.♔xf5 ♖xh2 is a draw as all the kingside pawns are eliminated.)* 28...♗b4 with a very unclear position - White's active king and the passed h-pawn are compensated by Black's active pieces that attack White's pawns on f3 and b2.

**27.♔d5** Possible, though the alternative was tiny bit better.

27.♔f7! was the correct tempo-winning move. Now after 27...♖xg2 28.♗xf6 ♘xf3 29.h4 everything is possible. The h-pawn is fast, but Black also has resources, a sample line is 29...♔d7

30.h5 ♗e3 31.h6 ♗xh6 32.♖xh6 ♖xb2 and with only the a2-pawn remaining, Black shouldn't lose.

**27...b6 28.f4** Carlsen wanted to avoid losing his kingside pawns on g2 and f3 like in the comment above, hence his decision on move 27, but after Black's next move the white king suddenly finds itself in danger.



**28...♔d7!** Threatening ...♘c2-e3#.

**29.g4?** Carlsen panicks.

29.fxe5 still kept the game within the drawing range. After 29...♖g4!? still threatening ...♘c2 and playing for mate. *(29...fxe5 30.♔xe5 ♖xg2 should be a relatively simple draw in view of the reduction in material.)* 30.e6+! more or less the only move. 30...♘xe6 31.♗xf6 ♗d6 now threatening ...♘c7#. 32.♘b5 the only move to stop ...♘c7. 32...♘f4+ 33.♔c4 ♘xg2+ *(33...♘h5+ 34.♗d4 is OK for White.)* 34.♗d4 with a roughly balanced, but still rather sharp, endgame.

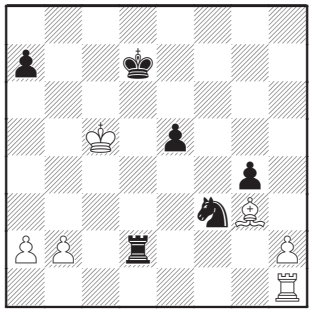
**29...fxg4?** Natural, but missing a great chance.

29...♘c2! was winning. After 30.gxf5 ♖g4 31.♗xf6 ♖xf4 the threat of ...♘e3 is devastating. 32.♗g5 (32.♗xe5 ♘e3#) 32...♘e3+ 33.♔xe5 ♖xf5+ 34.♔e4 ♖xg5 and Black wins a piece.

**30.fxe5 fxe5 31.♘e4** White is safe now.

**31...♘f3 32.♘xc5+** It was possible to leave the blockading knight on e4.

**32...bxc5 33.♗g3 ♖d6+ 34.♔xc5 ♖d2** Black still has some initiative, but one would expect Carlsen to be able to defend.



**35.♖c1?** The losing mistake. White's idea is to play ♖c4 and attack the pawn on g4, but Fedoseev finds the only winning move.

35.h3 ♖g2 36.♗xe5 ♘xe5 37.hxg4 should draw, but Carlsen was likely reluctant to go for this position as it's still not clear-cut;

35.b3 ♖xa2 36.♔d5 ♖d2+ 37.♔e4 ♔e6 38.♖a1! is a nice saving idea, using the a-file to create counterplay;

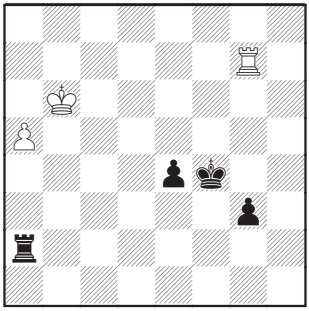
35.a4 ♖xb2 36.♖d1+ ♔e6 37.♖d8 should also draw, activating the rook. If Black takes on h2 then 37...♘xh2 38.♖e8+ ♔f7 39.♖xe5 reduces the material to the minimum.

**35...♔e6!** Black's priority is to keep the pawn on g4 alive and with this move it is possible as Black can play ...♔f5.

**36.♖c4 ♔f5 37.♖a4 ♘xh2 38.♗xh2 ♖xh2 39.♖xa7 ♖xb2** Black is winning - he is a pawn up and his pawns are further advanced down the board with the active help of his king.

**40.a4 ♖c2+ 41.♔b5 g3 42.♖g7 ♔f4 43.a5 ♖b2+ 44.♔c6 ♖a2 45.♔b6 e4**

The guests of the event were chess legends Nona Gaprindashvili (seen here with FIDE President Arkady Dvorkovich) and Lajosh Portisch *Photo: Michal Walusza, Maria Emelianova*



The usual scenario is that eventually Black would give up his rook for White's passed pawn while White cannot give up his rook for both Black's passed pawns. Here it doesn't even get to that point as Black's pawns are faster.

**46.a6 e3 47.♖f7+ ♔e4 48.♖e7+ ♔f3 49.♖f7+ ♔g2 50.a7 e2 51.♖e7 ♔f2 52.♖f7+ ♔e3 53.♖e7+ ♔d2 54.♖d7+ ♔c1 55.♖c7+ ♔b1** Carlsen resigned as he cannot stop the black pawns from queening after

**56.♖e7 g2**

**0-1**

It's important to note the character of the position that Carlsen lost. It was a position where his king was in danger, even in an endgame and in the complications, he lost his way. This relative weakness of his has been pointed out by others in the past, but the problem has always been how to get him in that type of a position where he would make a mistake. Fedoseev succeeded, partly because Carlsen was ambitious and marched his king forward, and this is something others will take into consideration: Carlsen's ambition can sometimes put his king in danger and then he is vulnerable.

Apart from the game with Fedoseev, Carlsen had little trouble with the rest, easily beating lower-rated opposition and drawing only with Yilmaz (2587) with the black pieces and Maghsoodloo (2723) with the white.

Whenever Carlsen plays classical chess, the inevitable question is whether the best chess player in the world will return to the World Championship cycle. There is an ongoing discussion in the inner circles of FIDE about a change of the World Cup time-controls, making them faster and playing more than one game a day, but whether that will be enough to lure Carlsen back, even if implemented (which is not a given) remains to be seen.

# THE WOMEN'S EVENT

In the beginning the Indian team kept the pace with their counterparts in the open section, winning their first seven matches. In spite of being weakened by the absence of Koneru, the Indians had mighty performances by 18-year-old Divya Deshmukh, who scored 9.5 out of 11 on board three, winning gold, and 22-year-old Vantika Agrawal, who scored 7.5 out of 9 on board four, also winning gold.

The stellar run of seven wins was stopped in round eight, when India lost to Poland. The loss was followed by a draw with USA and all of a sudden India were no longer in the lead, which was taken over by the young team of Kazakhstan.

In an Olympiad everything is decided in the last two rounds and in this critical time the Indian team showed their champions' character.

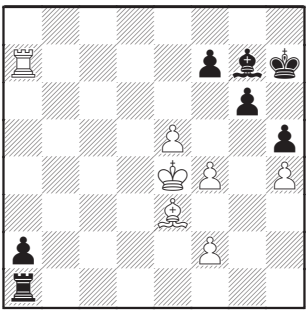
In round ten leaders Kazakhstan drew with Georgia, while India played China. A win for either team would mean fight for first place in the last round, while a loss would mean elimination from the fight for the podium.

China came to Budapest without their stars: World Champion Ju Wenjun, Hou Yifan, Tan Zhongyi and Le Tingjie, who are the top four players in the world on the rating list, all missed the Olympiad. Their board one, Zhu Jinner (Grandmaster at 22) was ranked 14th in the world, while the other players were much lower. They played well, all the players won rating and, perhaps most importantly, they had very young players like Song Yuxin (International Master at 19) and Lu Miaoyi (already an International Master at 14), ushering the next generation. Both Song Yuxin and Lu Miaoyi won bronze medals on their boards, while Zhu Jinner won gold on board one.

The match was decided on board three, with Divya delivering the decisive blow. On board two Guo and Vaishali had an exciting finish to their game.

## Guo **Qi** – Vaishali **Rameshbabu**

Olympiad Women 2024 Budapest HUN (10.3)



The position has been a draw for some time and even here both sides can just mark time. However, the players find a way to spark things up.

**43.e6!?** ♖**b1!** The only move!

43...fxe6? 44.♖xg7+ wins on the spot.

**44.e7 f5+!** Another only move!

The immediate 44...♖b7 loses to 45.♖xb7 a1♕ 46.e8♕ and Black doesn't have a perpetual as in the game as after 46...f5+ 47.♔d3! the king manages to escape: 47...♕c3+ 48.♔e2 ♕c4+ 49.♔e1! ♕c3+ 50.♗d2 ♕a1+ 51.♔e2 ♕a6+ 52.♕b5 ♕e6+ 53.♔d1 and there are no more checks.

**45.♔d5** If 45.♔d3 then 45...♖b8 46.♖xa2 ♗f6 picks up the pawn on e7.

**45...♖b7!** Vaishali again comes up with the only move not to lose.

**46.♖xb7 a1♕ 47.♖b8** The promotion cannot be stopped, but White's king is too exposed to avoid a perpetual check.

47.e8♕ ♕h1+ and White loses the rook on b7.

**47...♕a2+ 48.♔d6 ♕a6+ 49.♔d7 ♕d3+ 50.♔c7 ♕c4+ 51.♔d6 ♕d3+ 52.♔c7 ♕c4+ 53.♔d6 ♕d3+**

**½-½**

## Deshmukh **Divya (2483)** – **Ni** Shiqun

Olympiad Women 2024 Budapest HUN (10.3)

**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6** The Petroff is a popular choice among the Chinese players, both men and women.

**3.♘xe5 d6 4.♘f3 ♘xe4 5.♘c3** One of the most popular attempts to inject some life in the Petroff positions.

**5...♘xc3 6.dxc3 ♗e7 7.♗f4** When the line with 5.♘c3 started to become popular this development of the bishop was as often seen as the alternative 7.♗e3. However, in the past years the development of the bishop to e3 took over and was almost exclusively played. As it usually happens in such cases, Black managed to find reliable ways against it, so in search of a surprise White players sometimes revert to the nearly forgotten alternative.

**7...♘c6** The bishop on f4 doesn't control the c5-square, so a good alternative is the development of the knight to d7 and c5. By developing the knight on c6 Black indicates that she would likely castle long.

**8.♕d2 ♗e6 9.0-0-0 ♕d7** Black's development is automatic when she wants to castle long.

**10.h4 h6** A useful move, preventing ♘g5 ♗xg5, hxg5, which would open the h-file for the white rook.

**11.♔b1 ♗f6** 11...0-0-0 was also possible. After 12.♘d4 ♘xd4 13.♕xd4 it seems that White wins a pawn thanks to the attack on both a7 and g7, but after 13...c5 the pawn

Vaishali is increasing her confidence
*Photo: Michal Walusza*

on g7 is taboo in view of 14.♕xg7? ♖dg8 and the queen is trapped.

**12.♘d4** White doesn't really have an alternative to this knight jump, which leads to further simplifications. In the ensuing positions White will try to squeeze something out of her mild initiative.

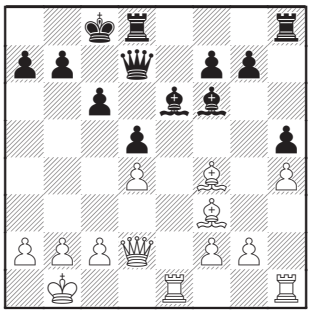
**12...♘xd4 13.cxd4 c6** 13...0-0-0 was again possible as the advance 14.d5 doesn't bring much after 14...♗f5 15.♕a5 ♔b8 16.♗e3 b6 17.♕a6 ♕c8 and Black defends successfully.

**14.♗e2 h5** This wasn't really necessary. It weakens the g5-square and exposes the h5-pawn, but in such a safe position Black can permit herself less-than-perfect play.

14...0-0-0 15.♗f3 ♗f5 kept the position as solid as it can be.

**15.♗f3** Threatening d5.

**15...d5 16.♖de1 0-0-0**



**17.♖e3** White's pieces are somewhat more active, but Black remains extremely solid.

**17...♗e7** Leaving the e5-square unattended, Black wants to play ...♗d6.

17...♖de8 with the idea to further simplify the position after ...♗f5 was more solid.

**18.♕a5** Posing Black an uncomfortable problem - which pawn to move to defend the pawn on a7?

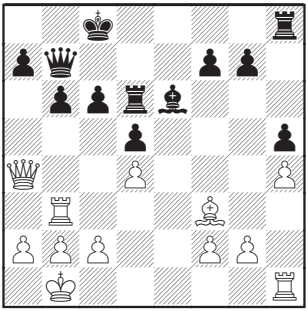
**18...b6?!** Black decides to weaken the light squares. It makes her position loose.

18...a6 was better. It does weaken the dark squares but at least everything is protected. Now 19.♕b6 can be met by 19...♗d6 and Black is fine.

**19.♖b3** Cute, as the queen cannot be taken in view of ♖b8#, but White had a stronger option.

19.♕a6+! ♕b7 20.♕e2 was stronger. It creates the double threat of ♗h5 (remember 14...h5?) and ♖xe6. Black cannot defend against both and ends up in trouble after 20...g6 21.♖xe6 fxe6 22.♕xe6+ ♕d7 23.♕xg6 when White has excellent winning chances.

**19...♕b7 20.♕a4 ♗d6 21.♗xd6 ♖xd6**



Black exchanged the dark-squared bishops, but from the remaining light-squared bishops White has the more active (and better) one. Objectively Black is fine, but she's forced to defend for a long time without any active counterplay. This fact is the key in this game. I happen to know Ni Shiqun, having played her in the last round of the Reykjavik open in 2015, when I was unceremoniously dispatched by her excellent dynamic play. She is an active player and choosing the Petroff, where she has to play solid, but passive positions, doesn't suit her style. Therefore it's not surprising that she started to commit small inaccuracies practically from the moment they left theory.

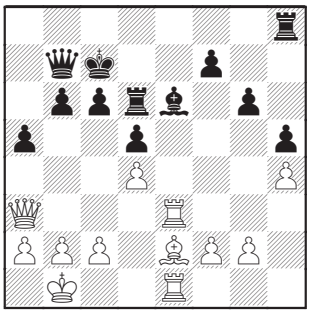
**22.♗e2 a5** Somewhat weakening, but not bad. Ni Shiqun itches to play an active move. 22...♕c7 would have been more in style with the Petroff.

**23.♕a3 ♔c7** A strange decision, leaving the queen on b7 out of play.

23...♕c7? 24.♖xb6 wins for White;

23...♖dd8 kept more harmony in Black's position.

**24.♖e3 g6 25.♖e1**



White switches her attention to the centre. Black has to worry about ♖e5 and a possible march of the f-pawn, in addition to taking care of the over-expanded queenside.

**25...♕c8 26.♖e5 ♖g8 27.♕g3** The uncoordination of Black's position is apparent, but she can still hold.

**27...♕d8 28.♗d3 ♔b7 29.♕f4** White's pieces comfortably sit on the weakened dark squares and Black cannot chase them away.

**29...♖d7 30.g3 ♗g4 31.f3 ♗e6 32.a3** Taking her time to improve the position. A luft for the king is always a good idea before starting concrete action.

**32...♕e7 33.♖h1 ♕d8** Black marks time, but now White finally breaks through.

**34.g4 hxg4** Black's position was already too difficult.

Black could try to resist with 34...♖h8 though she was worried about 35.♗xg6 though after 35...hxg4 36.♗h5 gxf3 37.♗xf3 White should still win thanks to the better pieces and the passed h-pawn.

**35.fxg4 g5** Otherwise White creates a passed pawn with h5.

**36.hxg5 ♖h8 37.♖h6 ♖d6 38.♖xh8 ♕xh8 39.♖xe6** A simple tactic that wins material.

**1-0**

A very instructive game where Black didn't commit any big mistakes, but was gradually outplayed because the character of the position was not to her taste. This strategic error of the Chinese team cost them a shot at the medals.

India, on the other hand, felt reinvigorated and in the last round beat Azerbaijan 3.5-0.5 and in view of Kazakhstan only drawing with USA, the victory ensured them of clear first place.

It was a collective effort by the Indian team, their inner strength of overcoming the setbacks in two consecutive rounds was the deciding factor in the improved performance when it mattered the most.

The team from Kazakhstan was another young team (all the players are in the range between 17 and 20 years old) that had an excellent result. Winning silver in such a strong competition while playing without their star Zhansaya Abdumalik (who won bronze on board one in Chennai) is a testament of their bright future.

Team USA was a mix of youth and experience and it was the youth that brought them glory. Carissa Yip (21) and Alice Lee (15) scored 10 out of 11 on board two and 8 out of 10 on board four, respectively. Yip won a gold medal and Lee won silver. The veterans Irina Krush and Anna Zatonskih had underwhelming events, but luckily their troubles didn't affect the team.

## THE MOST UNUSUAL GAMES AND OUTCOMES

To finish this long report on the Olympiad, here are a few "lighter" games. Curiously enough, all of them were played by Marie-Ange Moustache (65) from the Seychelles.

### Marie-Ange **Moustache** - Klean **Shuqja**

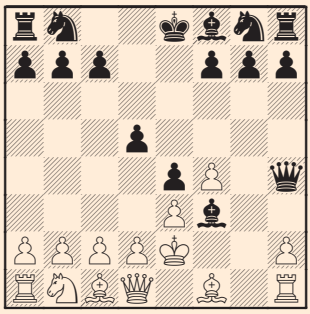
Olympiad Women 2024 Budapest HUN (1.65)

**1.g4 d5** In view of White's next move, perhaps this move can be called imprecise.

**2.f3 e5 3.e3** Avoiding disaster, but not for long.

**3...e4 4.f4** Fatal.

**4...♕h4+ 5.♔e2 ♗xg4+ 6.♘f3 ♗xf3**



**0-1**

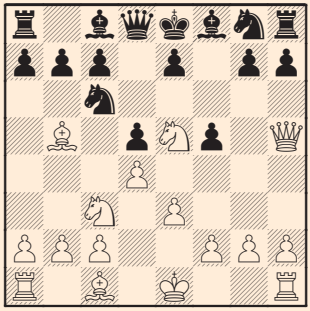
### Jessica **Cana** - Marie-Ange **Moustache**

Olympiad Women 2024 Budapest HUN (5.81)

**1.♘f3 f5 2.d4 d6 3.e3 ♘c6 4.♗b5 ♕d7** Dropping a piece to 5.d5, but White wants to finish development first, as they all teach us when we start.

**5.♘c3 d5** The Stonewall is usually solid, but here it crumbles instantly.

**6.♘e5 ♕d8 7.♕h5+**



**1-0**

## A.Chitan **Bernel** - Marie-Ange **Moustache**

Olympiad Women 2024 Budapest (7.84)

**1.d4 d5 2.♘f3 ♘c6** The Chigorin Defence is probably better than its reputation, though in this case Black fails to prove it.

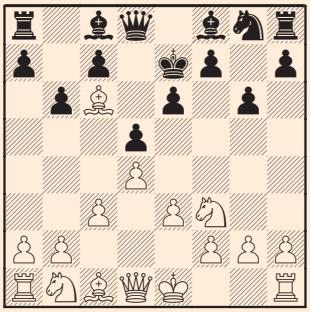
**3.e3 e6 4.c3 g6** Not really necessary, but nothing wrong with it just yet.

**5.♗d3 b6** Perhaps Black wanted to play a double fianchetto in the Chigorin Defence?

**6.♗b5 ♔e7** Hard to explain, so I won't even try.

6...♗b7 7.♕a4 ♘ge7 8.♘e5 a6! and Black is fine.

**7.♗xc6**



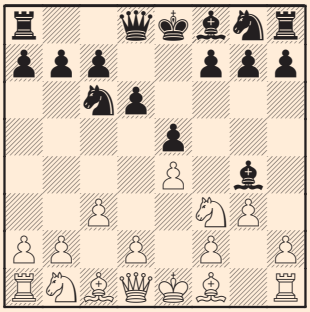
**1-0**

By the last round Moustache learnt to resist better.

## Marie-Ange **Moustache** - Farmer **Salamatu**

Olympiad Women 2024 Budapest (11.83)

**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.c3 d6 4.g3 ♗g4**



**5.♘h4** Perhaps White valued her knights more than the opponent's bishops.

**5...♗xd1** And in spite of resisting heroically until move 17, White couldn't avoid another defeat.

**0-1**

The next Olympiad is already scheduled for 2026 and Tashkent.

## Price update for BCM Subscriptions

*Effective 1st November 2024*

Dear readers,

As of 1st November this year, the subscription rates for *BCM* will be adjusted to £64 for UK subscribers and £96 for those outside the UK. This decision comes after careful consideration, and we make this announcement with a heavy heart, fully aware of the financial pressures many of our readers face. Having held our prices steady since 2015, we are now compelled to reflect the substantial rise in production costs that we can no longer absorb.

In addition to subscription changes, we will soon be updating the pricing of other *BCM* products. Full details will be available on our website in the coming weeks.

We've worked hard to defer these adjustments for as long as possible, and we hope our readers will understand the necessity of this move. Your continued support and loyalty to *BCM* mean a great deal to us, and we sincerely appreciate your understanding during this transition.

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***BCM Editorial Team***

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# CHESS COMES HOME TO INDIA

## By Grandmaster Raymond Keene OBE

***Chess, thought to have originated in India over two millennia ago, has made a triumphant return with India's double victory at the Budapest Chess Olympiad. As Gukesh D prepares to challenge Ding Liren for the world title, India's growing dominance in the game marks a historic moment for the sport.***

The roots of chess probably go back to India of over two millennia ago. The first literary references stem from around 600 AD ( CE ) , thus indicating that chess was already well established in the general consciousness.

In 19th century chess, the Brahmin Moheschunder Bannerjee from Calcutta established a formidable reputation in numerous games against the powerful English master John Jo Cochrane. In the 1930s, Sultan Khan briefly visited Europe, represented the British Empire at Olympiad level, and even defeated the mighty and near invincible Capablanca. In the early years of the 21st century, Viswanathan Anand held the world title for six years before ceding the palm to Carlsen.

But now chess has finally come home to India, with a double victory in the recently concluded Chess Olympiad in Budapest, taking gold in both the female and Open sections. The Indian Open team was led by Gukesh D, who will be the youngest challenger ever, when he fights the Chinese world champion, Ding Liren, for the supreme accolade later this year in Singapore — a contest endowed by sponsors, Google, with a multi-million dollar prize fund.

I n the absence of Carlsen, that chessboard Achilles, sulking in his tent, I had categorised the forthcoming battle in Singapore as a combat between relative Lilliputians, or, as Milton put it in Paradise Lost: that small infantry. However, after his epic performance in the Olympiad, Gukesh is beginning to show signs of developing Brobdingnagian growth hormones. In Budapest Gukesh (born May 29, 2006) representing India on top board, scored an undefeated eight and a half points from ten games, including a victory against the dangerous former world title challenger, Fabiano Caruana.

Let us now return to the possible origins of our game, which seems, inexorably, to be coming home to India, and in increasingly spectacular fashion.

Petteia was a classical Greek board game, or group of games, mentioned both by Plato, and by Aristotle, the latter of whom was to become the personal tutor of Alexander the Great. Petteia clearly demanded pure reason, it symbolised warfare and, crucially, it was played without dice. However, it was not yet chess.

Around 330 BC, Alexander the Great invaded Persia and marched on towards Asia Minor and India. En route he founded Hellenic colonies which lasted for centuries. Many of these were, for obvious megalomaniac reasons, named "Alexandria"; the name still persists in corrupted versions, such as Kandahar in Afghanistan and İskenderun in Turkey. The Greek colonists, assuming, of course, that they were good students of Plato and Aristotle, would have played petteia and Hellenic influence in the Arabic and Indian regions would have been considerable. Indeed, Alexander figures in the Quran, so huge was his impact, where he appears under the fearsome sounding name of Dul Karnain, the horned one, doubtless referring to his signature ram 's -horn helmet.

The centrality of gambling in ancient India was reflected in their giant national epic The Mahabharata. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that a powerful element of gambling and risk should have invaded the territory of their social games. This epic poem, written in the fourth century BC, is central to Indian culture. It is the longest poem ever written, extending for more than 100,000 stanzas, around 15 times the length of The Bible . The Mahabharata even contains within itself a shorter version of the that other Sanskrit epic, The Ramayana. The Mahabharata goes back to the sixth century BC.

Through this vast poem runs the ineluctable pressure of predestination in human affairs. Typically, human action is puppet-like, in the hands of the gods. Indeed, the Pandava Prince in the Mahabharata loses his entire kingdom on the throw of dice. A culture which produced such an epic is liable to have as its predominant mode of board games, those which are determined by chance, by the throw of dice, rather than by free will. On the other hand, a culture which believes essentially in free will, that human beings are in charge of their own affairs, will play quite a different type of game. These will be games where strategies are conceived exclusively by the players, without the intervention of the aleatory element of dice. This was precisely what characterised the Greek petteia, which perfectly fits the bill for the necessary injection of logic and reason, which characterises chess.

Sure enough, chaturanga has been identified as just such a dice game, played in India during the long period when The Mahabharata (an epic of battle) was achieving its definitive form. Chaturanga is the earliest precursor of chess that has been clearly recognised. The Sanskrit name, meaning "Divided into Four", was also a term for the Indian army of the time, which was composed of four divisions: the elephants, the chariots, the cavalry, and the infantry. The word "chaturanga" looks alien, but it becomes less so if one thinks of the Latin, French, Spanish or Russian words for "four" (quattuor/quatre/cuatro/ четыре aka chye-tir-ye). Indeed, dwell on "quarter angle" for a moment, and the linguistic roots in the Sanskrit become even more obvious. Documentary evidence for this dice game exists from the beginning of the seventh century AD. It is, however, more than likely that its ancestry is vastly more ancient.

Indeed, it is my contention, based on ingenious and inspired speculation by the respected Russian Grandmaster, the late Yuri Averbakh, that in the centuries after the establishment of the Hellenic colonies on the route of Alexander, chaturanga, the Indian war game of chance met petteia, the Greek game of reason and from this collision of cultures, chess was born. The liberating affect of petteia was, according to Averbakh's theory, to eliminate the dice element from chaturanga.

**BCM exclusive:**

# ALIREZA FIROUZJA on the Global Chess League and the future of chess

By Milan Dinic
Photo: BCM, GCL - Michal Walusza

The 21-year-old Alireza Firouzja is one of the greatest starts in chess today. Marked by Magnus Carlsen as his most likely real successor, the Iranian-born Frenchman is the youngest player ever to have surpassed the 2800 rating, beating even the famous Norwegian.

This year it was his debut at the Global Chess League. Playing for Triveni Continental Kings, he won six games, drew one and lost three - making him the top scorer on the so-called Icon board.

BCM sat down with Alireza during the GCL in London, where he shared his thoughts on the tournament's unique format, the state of chess tournaments, and his personal journey in the sport.

Firouzja, known for his meteoric rise through the chess ranks, appeared relaxed and thoughtful, offering both praise and critical reflection on the direction chess is taking in its new era.

***British Chess Magazine: First of all, how does it feel to be playing in the Global Chess League here? What do you make of the entire concept?***

***Alireza Firouzja:*** Yeah, I think it's good to have new things. I think the fact that, if you're playing something new, it's very interesting, and it shows that people also like to, from time to time, watch new things, faster things. So, I'm very happy to be here.

**THE FORMAT WITHOUT TIME INCREMENT IS REALLY PERFECT. ALL FORMATS HAVE SOME ISSUES, PROBABLY, BUT I THINK WE SHOULD NOT CRITICISE IT FOR ONE TOURNAMENT LIKE THIS IN THE CALENDAR YEAR. IT HAS BROUGHT EXCITEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT FOR EVERYONE AND THIS IS THE RIGHT DIRECTION FOR CHESS!**

***BCM: Are you happy with this format, where there's no increment per move? You get 20 minutes, and that's it.***

***Alireza Firouzja:*** The format without time increment is really perfect. All formats have some issues, probably, but I think we should not criticise it for one tournament like this in the calendar year. It has brought excitement and engagement for everyone and this is the right direction for chess!

***BCM: Would you be happy to play more tournaments like this without increment?***

***Alireza Firouzja:*** Yeah, of course.

***BCM: Do you think that would be better for chess?***

***Alireza Firouzja:*** I don't know if it would be better. I think it's something new, and we should try and see how people give feedback. As a player, I'm comfortable with it. It's still a lot of time to think, but yeah, it's interesting.

***BCM: There's an argument that there's too much chess for the elite players—too many tournaments without enough exclusivity. What do you think?***

***Alireza Firouzja:*** I don't think there are too many tournaments. If you look at classical chess around the world, we don't have that many elite tournaments anymore. I play about four elite tournaments outside the Grand Chess Tour. In the past, like in 2010 or 2011, there were more, like the Tal Memorial, Bilbao, and London Classic. We lost many tournaments during the pandemic, and we should bring them back.

***BCM: Are you more in favour of classical or rapid tournaments?***

***Alireza Firouzja:*** I think classical chess is very good, but maybe we can make it a bit faster. I'm not saying we should only play rapid, but maybe somewhere in between—like one hour with a 10-second increment.

***BCM: Chess is slowly gaining more attention in the mainstream media. What's your take on how we can further improve its presence?***
***Alireza Firouzja:*** It's getting better than a few years ago. Chess is at its peak right now. The number of people watching events like my match against Magnus in Paris was amazing. There's big potential, but organisers need to present tournaments well.

***BCM: Do chess players themselves need to do more to engage with the media?***

***Alireza Firouzja:*** Yeah, I think nowadays, chess players are doing much more. Hikaru, Magnus, Anish, and others are active on social media, giving interviews. I think it's more on organisers now to present tournaments better, but yes, chess players need to be involved too.

***BCM: You train six to seven hours a day. What do you do in your free time?***

***Alireza Firouzja:*** I sleep eight to nine hours, then hang out with my family. I do bowling, ping pong, tennis, and go to the gym sometimes. It's important to stay active.

***BCM: Many parents worry about whether to push their children into chess. What's your advice for parents?***

***Alireza Firouzja:*** Becoming a professional is tricky. Parents and the child need to discuss it, and if the child really wants it and the coaches see talent, it's a good path. But there's always a risk if you don't reach the top.

***BCM: What's the best advice you ever received?***

***Alireza Firouzja:*** My coach, IM Mohsen Sharbaf, told me to just play and learn from playing. That's the best advice I got.

***BCM: What's been the best moment of your career so far?***

***Alireza Firouzja:*** Maybe reaching 2800, but playing in the Global Chess League was also very cool.

***BCM: And the hardest?***

***Alireza Firouzja:*** The hardest was the Candidates Tournament in Madrid 2022. I worked a lot but didn't do well. It was painful, but I learned a lot from it.

# HUNGARIAN HITS: A REVIEW OF "CHESS WARRIOR THE LIFE AND GAMES OF GEZA MAROCZY"

## BY LASZLO JAKOBETZ, WITH A FOREWORD BY LAJOS PORTISCH AND COVER DESIGN BY SOFIA POLGAR, PUBLISHED BY RUSSELL ENTERPRISES 2024

By Peter O'Brien

***In this stunning book, Laszlo Jakobetz resurrects the legacy of Hungary's enigmatic chess maestro with unparalleled detail and affection***

I first visited Hungary as a teenage student, President of London University Chess Club. We were certainly one of the pioneer club sides to make a chess tour of what used to be called Eastern Europe, and we lived a wonderful, multi-dimensional learning experience. In Budapest, that beautiful city on the Danube, our games were followed by superb Hungarian players, endgame study composers, problemists and numerous connoisseurs of Caissa. For me, already deeply immersed in trying to understand what was really going on inside the so-called "Soviet bloc" countries, the opportunity to be in a country which had fought so hard (and alas unsuccessfully) to liberate itself from the yoke was priceless. My early studies had already introduced me to the works of such incredible minds as John Von Neumann (I use the westernised version of his name), Janos Kornai, Theodor Herzl and countless others. And all this, alongside the music and dance for which the country is justly famous.

I have to confess that then I did not fully grasp the immense importance of Geza Maroczy. It was the work of Richard Reti which had struck me most, and I guess that was because of parallels with the changes in the art world which were going on a century back. But now, this magnificent book by Laszlo Jakobetz leaves no chess player or student of the game with any excuse not to know Maroczy. He dominated Hungarian chess for at least half a century

and brought immense inspiration to generations of his fellow countrymen (and countrywomen!). As Jakobetz points out, we have grown accustomed to thinking in threes about Hungarian chess. Highlight Barcza, and Szabo and Benko come to mind. Mention Portisch, and you also leap to Ribli and Adorjan. Say Polgar, you have the three sisters. Maroczy has inspired them all. Yet what is intriguing is how this influence worked. No widely known or practised opening system is associated with him (indeed, there is little evidence that he himself played the "Maroczy Bind" on more than a handful of occasions). He did not set up any formal school. He was not famous as an endgame composer (unlike for example Pal Benko). And he did not feel at home with the Hungarian exponents of hypermodernism, either through Reti or theorists like Gyula Breyer with his celebrated declaration "After 1.e4, White's game is in the last death throes".

Maybe Gedeon Barcza grasped the essence in his comment "You do not develop into a Maroczy, you are born a Maroczy" (this citation headlines Chapter One of the book). What seems to have happened is that Maroczy inspired through his sheer skills on the board, with those skills displayed while he was simultaneously handling his professional work in the civil service and bringing up his family. As Jakobetz notes in his Preface, that professional life and family life had to be managed in what was, at least during the second part of Maroczy's life, an extremely unstable political and social environment. Indeed, from the immediate post-World War One years, Maroczy lived much of the time outside of Hungary. His friendship with Max Euwe proved invaluable in helping him to live in Holland, while there were long spells in England and the USA. During all that time he was very frequently separated from his family and seems to have operated as a classic migrant worker, sending remittances back to the family. By then he was a chess professional, with regular invitations to the world's leading chess tournaments and being the key member in the Hungarian national sides which regularly figured at or around the top in the chess Olympiads organised from 1924 onwards.

Maroczy's tournament and match record, set out in depth in Appendix B of the book, extended from 1891 (when he was 20 years old) to 1947 (four years before his death in 1951), with major breaks during the years of the two world wars. While there were uneven performances, with less strong results often linked to work pressures, Maroczy's record was so impressive that he was for a long period considered to be the worthy challenger to the World Champion Lasker. That match never took place but such frustration as there must have been does not seem to have dampened Maroczy's enthusiasm and commitment to the game. Appendix C lists several hundred simultaneous exhibitions, a significant number of which were blindfold, squeezed into just over a decade from the early 1920s to the early 1930s. These became a standard way of earning enough to provide a decent living in hard times for himself and his family.

What of the quality of Maroczy's games? Over his exceptionally long playing career, he defeated almost all of the outstanding players whom he played. His games are characterised by a general aversion to well-known opening systems and a focus on generating positions where the inherent skills of the players are at a premium (it is difficult to imagine him being happy with today's computer-driven games). While his approach was clearly more influenced by the classicism of Tarrasch than the modernity of Nimzovitch (which in any case only became formalised when Maroczy was in the second part of his life), the range of capabilities, as with any top player, is plain to see. He might be described as the model of "a player's player". There too we can sense the magnetism of his power for people of a little less ability. His games gave them the sense that they could aspire to follow his example. That, coupled with a

most generous personality and outstanding teaching ability, must have driven all who saw him to strive to realise their potential. What more can you ask?

The pictorial material contained in this book exceeds all expectations. I counted upwards of 280 photographs of people, places and objects, along with cartoons, newspaper cuttings and postage stamps. Among these, there is a photo of Ferenc Puskas, the most famous of the wonderful Hungarian soccer team of the 1950s, a team torn apart in the aftermath of the 1956 Hungarian uprising. It can be said that this was the first truly iconic team in soccer history. The individual and collective efforts of that team have unquestionably left their mark on the Spanish sides of this century. It is therefore a massive tribute to the standing of Maroczy that he too is so much remembered in his country and that there is a museum dedicated to him.

The phrase "labour of love" has alas become so hackneyed that to use it seems almost to downgrade a work. But I insist on it here for two reasons. One is that Laszlo Jakobetz has deployed extraordinary energy and diligence to give us what must rank as the definitive "Life and Games" of Maroczy. It is quite simply unthinkable that anybody could do a job which would stand scrutiny against "the Jakobetz Standard". The second reason is at least as important as the first. For those of us for whom Hungary and its peoples have always exerted an immense fascination, with astonishing contributions in so many fields of the arts and sciences, I suppose that it has become almost trivial to say that if someone or something is brilliant the odds are that the source is Hungarian. Yet Maroczy represents a dimension which is a little out of the box. His recommendations, several of which are cited as chapter headings, appear as almost mundane compared with the quality of his work. It's as if he is telling us "there is nothing remarkable here, you can do it". The only difficulty, dear Geza, is that we can't.

# QUOTES and QUERIES

# CHESS IN 1924 – A YEAR OF TRANSITION

By Alan Smith

***The year 1924 was a pivotal one in the chess world, marked by debates over who would challenge José Raúl Capablanca for the world championship, the emergence of future legends, and the passing of some of the game's greatest pioneers.***

While Rubinstein and Alekhine's records sparked conversations about their worthiness to face Capablanca, the death of stalwarts like Joseph Henry Blackburne and Curt von Bardeleben marked the end of an era. At the same time, a young Mikhail Botvinnik was starting to turn heads, and David Bronstein's birth gave the chess world a glimpse of its creative future. Let's dive into the highlights of a century ago, where chess legends clashed, and new talents emerged on the scene.

**6276** The We know the answer in 2024, but a century ago the identity of Capablanca's first challenger was a subject of debate. Rubinstein or Alekhine? The records of the players give a clue. Rubinstein and Alekhine had met 11 times and the score between the two was level. Alekhine had dominated their most recent encounters. So far so good.

Look at their records versus Capablanca and Lasker and it is a very different story. Rubinstein had a small minus versus Lasker and a small plus against Capablanca. Alekhine had not beaten either of the world champions and had a poor score against them, =7 -7 !

**6277** The chess world mourned the death of Joseph Henry Blackburne and Curt von Bardeleben. Blackburne's chess career spanned over half a century during which he defeated almost every player of note Anderssen, Steinitz, Zukertort, Chigorin, Tarrasch, Gunsberg, Lasker, Janowski, Pillsbury, Marshall, Nimzowitsch.

Von Bardeleben made his name by winning the Vizayanagaram tournament in 1883, following that up by finishing fifth at Nuremburg later that year. He was at his best in shorter events while he defeated both Teichmann and Spielmann in matches.

Here is a game played when he was 16 years old.

**Curt von Bardeleben** - Johannes **Zukertort**

Leipzig 1877

**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗b5 a6?!** This is suspect. **5.♗xc6 dxc6 6.♘xe5 ♘xe4 7.♘xe4 ♕d4 8.O–O ♕xe5 9.♖e1 ♗e6 10.d4 ♕d5?** This highlights the problem with 4...a6, Black needs to find accurate moves just to stay on the board. **11.♗g5! ♗e7 12.♗xe7 ♔xe7 13.♘c5 b6 14.♘xe6 fxe6 15.♕g4 ♖af8 16.♖e5 ♕d6 17.♖ae1 ♔d8 18.♖xe6 ♕d7 19.♕e4 ♖e8 20.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 21.♕xe8+ ♕xe8 22.♖xe8+ ♔xe8 23.f4** ...1-0

*Deutsche Schachzeitung*, February 1882

**6278** On a happier note 1924 saw the birth of David Bronstein. An ever imaginative player who drew a match with Botvinnik in 1951. He was a regular visitor to the United Kingdom. The following game was played on a visit to Scotland in 1992.

David **Bronstein** - Willie **Hulme**

East Kilbride Open, 1992

**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 exd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗b4 6.♘xc6 bxc6 7.♗d3 d5 8.exd5 cxd5 9.O–O O–O 10.♗g5 ♗e6 11.♘e2 ♗d6** Another option was: 11...h6 12.♗h4 ♗d6 13.♘d4 c5 14.♘xe6 fxe6 15.♕e2 Salov - Nunn Wijk aan Zee 1991.

**12.♘d4 c5 13.♘f5 ♗xh2+ 14.♔xh2 c4 15.♔g1 cxd3 16.♕xd3 ♕d7 16...h6 Bryson 17.♘xh6+ gxh6 17...♔h8 18.♗xf6 ♕f5 19.♕d2 ♕a4 20.b4 1–0**

*Scotland on Sunday*, 17th May 1992

**6279** Two future world champions were starting to make waves. The young Mikhail Botvinnink had a good year, winning three events and scoring 25 out of 30.

Mikhail **Botvinnik** - I. **Folga**

Leningrad 1924, 2nd & 3rd category

**1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 g6 3.♗f4 ♗g7 4.♘bd2 O–O** 4...d5 **5.h3 b6 6.e4 ♗b7 7.♗d3 d6 8.O–O ♘bd7 9.♕e2 c5 10.c3 b6 11.♗a6 ♗xa6 12.♕xa6 ♘h5 13.♗h2 e5 14.♘c4 f5 15.dxe5 fxe4 16.♘g5 ♘b8 17.exd6 ♕c6 18.♕a3 ♕d5 19.♕b3!** The perfect antidote to Black's fork.

**19...♔h8** Black's choices were bleak. 19...b5 20.♘e3 ♕xb3 21.axb3 and Black loses a second pawn as 21...♘f6 loses the exchange after 22.♘e6. 19...♕xg5 is no better, 20.♘d6+ ♔h8 21.♘f7+ ♖xf7 22.♕xf7 ♕d8 23.♖fe1.

**20.♘e5 ♕xb3 21.axb3 ♗xe5 22.♗xe5+ ♔g8 23.♘e6 ♘c6 24.♘xf8 ♘xe5 25.♘e6 ♖e8 26.♘c7 ♖d8 27.♘b5 a5 28.b4 axb4 29.♖a7 b3 30.♖fa1 ♔f8 31.♖e7 ♘c4 32.♖xh7 ♘f6 33.♖h8+ ♘g8 34.♖a7 ♘xb2 35.♖hh7 ♘f6 36.♖hf7+ ♔g8 37.♖xf6 1–0**

*Chess Games website*

Meanwhile Cecil Purdy finished fourth in the New South Wales championship. He crossed the Tasman Sea in late December to participate in the New Zealand championship held at Nelson over the New Year. Sixteen

players were split into two groups of eight, the first five progressing to the 5 round final. Here is a game he won in round 3.

**B.W. Stenhouse - Cecil Purdy**

New Zealand ch, Nelson 1924-25

**1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.♘f3 g5 4.♗c4 ♗g7 5.d4 ♘c6 6.h4 h6 7.♘c3 d6 8.hxg5 hxg5 9.♖xh8 ♗xh8 10.♘d5 ♗g4 11.c3 ♔f8 12.♘d2 ♘f6 13.♕c2 ♗xf3 14.gxf3 ♘xd5 15.exd5 ♕e7+ 16.♔f2? ♘xd4?!** This looks strong, and White did not spot the flaw. **17.cxd4? 17.♕d3! gxf3 18.♗xf4 ♕xh4+ 19.♗g3.** Stanes in *Melbourne Weekly Times* 28th February 1925.

**17...♗xd4+ 18.♔g2 g4 19.♖h1 ♕g5 20.♗e1 gxf3+ 21.♔xf3 ♖e8 22.♗h4 ♖e3+ 23.♔f2 ♖h3+ 24. 0−1**

*Evening Star*, 17th January 1925

Purdy had +4-1 at the end of the year. A further +1=1 saw him joint first in his preliminary group. He carried forward +2=1-1 into the final. Purdy scored +3=1 and was leading the tournament by half a point with a round to play, but faced his nearest rival with black in the deciding game. His win versus Gyles won him the event by a point and a half margin.

**6280** The novelty of the year was Rubinstein's revival of a discarded line of the Slav Defence. 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘fd7 **5.♕g4** was another miniature, introduced by Dr Souza Mendes in a match against Vianna in Brazil. The score is available in the *Birmingham Daily Post* 23rd December 1924.

**6281** Alexander Alekhine cannot have been entirely pleased with his play at New York. He followed that with a simul tour, then got down to work writing the tournament book of New York 1924. this time was by no means wasted, as he demonstrated at Baden Baden next year.


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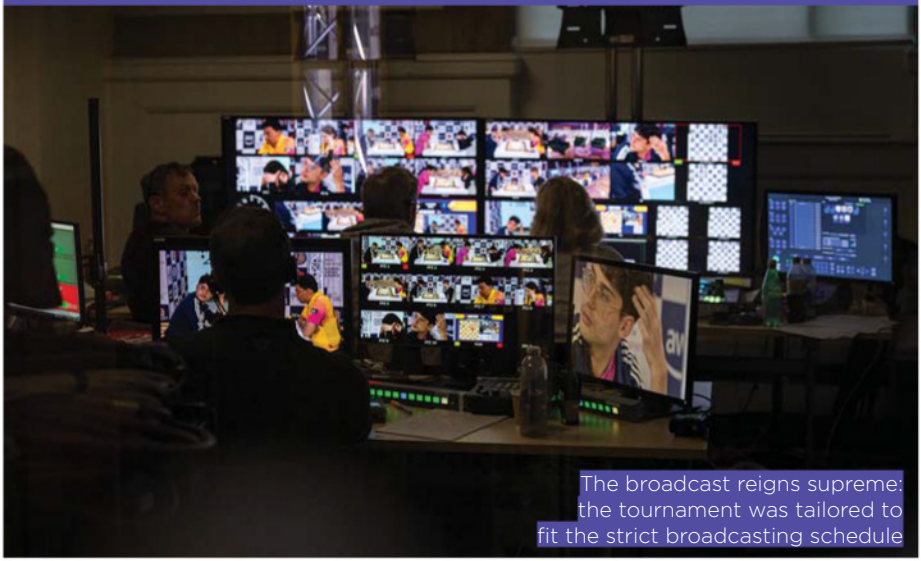


The broadcast reigns supreme: the tournament was tailored to fit the strict broadcasting schedule

# RAPID CHESS REVOLUTION: INSIDE THE GCL'S SECOND SEASON

By Milan Dinic; Photo: Michal Walusza (GCL Official Photographer)

***Thanks to the enthusiasm of business leaders with a passion for both cricket and chess, many of the strongest players in the world came to London to take part in a unique rapid chess tournament.***

London's Friends House in Euston was the centre of the chess world between 3rd and 12th October, hosting the Tech Mahindra Global Chess League (GCL) as the strongest players in the world - Magnus Carlsen, Hikaru Nakamura, Alireza Firouzja, Viswanathan Anand, former Women's World Champions like Hou Yifan and Alexandra Kosteniuk and others - gathered for the second season of a unique chess tournament. I was at the event as the press officer, interviewing players and filing daily reports for the media. Before we dig into the event, let's first have a look at why this concept stands out.

## FROM A TWITTER CHALLENGE TO A GLOBAL EVENT

The idea of GCL came from Anand Mahindra, the Chairman of the Mahindra Group, a multi-billion dollar Indian conglomerate operating in 100 countries and employing 260,000 people. During Covid, he was watching chess online and made a comment about it on Twitter, to which an Indian streamer sent him a challenge to organise a chess event—which Mahindra accepted. The International Chess Federation (FIDE) also saw the tweet, and soon afterwards the project was set in motion. In the summer of 2023, the first edition of the GCL was held in Dubai (I was there as well, again as the press officer of the event).

Triveni Continental Kings – the winners of the 2024 Global Chess League (From left to right: Alireza Firouzja, Wei Yi, Alexandra Kosteniuk, Loek van Wely, team manager Akash, Javokhir Sindarov, Valentina Gunina and Teimour Radjabov)

## A NEW APPROACH TO CHESS

The concept of the Global Chess League is groundbreaking in many ways. First, it is completely organised and run by people who are business professionals and cricket lovers first and chess fans second. The league has six teams, all privately owned by big companies or multi-millionaires who had to go through a competitive process to draft the players. This is also the only competition where both men and women play together on the same team. Each team has six members—an Icon player, two superstar Grandmasters, two women players, and a prodigy player—all playing with the same colour pieces, which are decided after a coin toss. As the event is a round-robin, teams face each other twice, with colours switching in the rematch. This year, there was a special twist—no time increments at all; each player had 20 minutes for their moves and that was it. This meant that even if a player was winning but in time trouble, they could end up losing (and it happened!). Finally, for the first time ever in chess, thanks to the GCL, the league was broadcast live on sports networks around the world. The broadcast itself resembled coverage of a football or cricket match rather than the usual chess event.

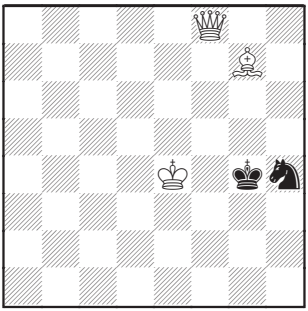
"We believe this concept will bring more excitement and interest in the game and that it will lift chess to a new level. We have seen this from the lively atmosphere at Friends House where the audience was cheering loudly, making Mexican waves, enjoying themselves. We want to make chess a truly global sport which can be easily watched by millions around the world, regardless of their chess knowledge," Sameer Pathak, the CEO of the Global Chess League, said to BCM when we asked him for a comment.

"The second season was a huge success for us. We are in this for the long run and we are already thinking about the next season," he added.

## THE TIME INCREMENT ISSUE

But not everyone shares Pathak's views. Some players and others in the chess community expressed dissatisfaction that the games were played without any time increment, which led to several dramatic endgames in which pieces were flying everywhere, players were visibly shaking, and it was difficult to tell what was going on. "It's not real chess," one said.

Here's one example: Magnus Carlsen had a completely winning position against Alireza Firouzja, but, his time ran out and he did not claim a draw (which he had the right to as he was winning). So, he lost. This was the final position:



But isn't that part of the fun for the audience?

Not to mention the obvious reason—the broadcast schedule. In fact, one of the most important aspects that distinguished this event from others I've witnessed in recent years was the broadcast: everything was timed to the second, and everything and everyone had to adapt to it. For some chess players and die-hard chess enthusiasts, it was difficult to accept that the schedule had priority over the quality of the games. But the counterargument is: if you want more people to watch chess and engage with it, you need to make it more fun and approachable. Another argument—highlighted by a very prominent figure from the chess broadcasting world—is that with

Disbelief: Carlsen loses on time with an extra queen against Firouzja

time increments, we effectively trick the viewers: "They watch the game, it's down to the wire and everyone is asking 'will this player manage to mate him with just 10 seconds on the clock?' and all of a sudden he has 20 seconds on the clock after he makes a move, and that's just frustrating." In the end, even the main players in the event—Carlsen, Nakamura, and Firouzja—all came out in favour of this concept.

## THE TOURNAMENT: TRIVENI WIN SECOND CONSECUTIVE TITLE

The reigning champions, Triveni Continental Kings, defended their title successfully by defeating the PBG Alaskan Knights in a thrilling final. Coached by the famous Dutch GM Loek van Wely and led by Alireza Firouzja, Triveni had a strong performance in the league, always staying around the top three places. Despite PBG (led by Anish Giri) dominating the league stage, Triveni emerged victorious in both final matches, clinching the title with scores of 13-7 and 9-7. Alexandra Kosteniuk's crucial victory over Tan Zhongyi in the final match sealed the championship for Triveni, with Kosteniuk being named Player of the Match. Triveni's ability to come back in the finals, despite earlier setbacks, highlighted the resilience and team spirit that defined their journey throughout the tournament.

The league featured many memorable moments, such as Magnus Carlsen's fierce games against Vishy Anand and a standout performance by Alireza Firouzja, showcasing the excitement of rapid chess without time increments. In addition to the sporting excitement, the Global Chess League exemplified a new era for chess as a spectator sport, blending traditional chess strategy with the spirit of team sports. The league's unique team format, where players competed not just for individual glory but for their teams, added an emotional element to the matches, with teammates cheering each other on and strategizing together. This camaraderie was evident throughout the tournament and was a key factor in the league's appeal, making it more relatable to fans used to team-based sports like football or basketball.

## A NEW FUTURE FOR CHESS?

Interesting things were happening both on and off the board. On one of the final days of the event, an accidental round table happened in the press/VIP room. Magnus Carlsen, joined by his father Henrik, Anand Mahindra, new chess investor—German multi-millionaire Jan Henric Buettner, FIDE President Arkady Dvorkovich, Chess.com's Danny Rensch, BCM co-owner Stephen Lowe, and myself sat together to discuss the League and, as it turned out, the future of chess. It transpired that Carlsen is much more interested in Fischer random than the usual chess, and it seems there are many more events in this format coming our way.

The Tech Mahindra Global Chess League is not just a chess tournament. It is a movement aiming to redefine the way chess is perceived and enjoyed globally. The GCL is pushing boundaries, but the key question is: will the huge investment pay off in viewers and advertising revenue? It's a long-term project that is still in the investing phase. As Danny Rensch from Chess.com put it—"you can't create a tradition overnight."

BCM Director and co-owner Stephen Lowe was invited to give the prize to Magnus Carlsen for his great victory against Viswanathan Anand

GCL CEO Sameer Pathak congradulating Alexandra Kosteniuk for her crucial role in the finals that helped Triveni win the title

The winners of the 2024 Global Chess League

# NAPOLEON & GOETHE
## THE TOUCHSTONE OF GENIUS

**By Raymond Keene OBE**

Raymond Keene OBE is uniquely placed to write up the interaction between those two titans of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, Napoleon Bonaparte and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. The former was the most powerful statesman and warrior the world had ever witnessed, up to that time; the latter was the epitome of European culture, with his Faust epic considered the greatest creation of German literature. Both loved the game of chess.

# CELEBRATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF FIDE AND OF SURREALISM

**BY CELIA RABINOVITCH**, PHD, MFA, AUTHOR *DUCHAMP'S PIPE: A CHESS ROMANCE – MARCEL DUCHAMP & GEORGE KOLTANOWSKI* (BERKELEY: NORTH ATLANTIC BOOKS, 2020)

This year - 2024 - we celebrate twin cultural centennial birthdays. It is the 100th anniversary of Surrealism (brought into the world at the Hotel de Ville in Paris, by Andre Breton, and poets Phillipe Soupault, and Robert Desnos) - and July, 1924 also in Paris marks this year as the 100th anniversary of FIDE, The International Chess Federation as the governing body of the sport of chess. Let us consider these moments in Paris through the creation of FIDE and of Surrealism - two elegant expressions of the human imagination and intellect.

Chess captured the imagination of many artists in the 20th century. It eliminated boundaries between bohemia and the bourgeoisie, becoming a way for artists to test their mettle against chess masters, many even becoming masters themselves. Chess and surrealism connect in the realm of visualisation and strategy, for the capacity to anticipate and visualise the movements on the chess board challenges the imagination and intellect as in an artist's visualisation of images and forms.

Many surrealist and modern artists and poets played chess - Marcel Duchamp, Dorothea Tannning, Max Ernst, Fredrick Kiesler, Man Ray, Enrico Donati, Hans Richter, Jaqueline Lamba, Yves Tanguy, Kage Sage -all played chess, and often thought about it or depicted it in their work. Perhaps it was the sense of struggle. But more likely the motive was to *épater les bourgeoisie* - to beat them at their own game, to make chess a surrealist game.

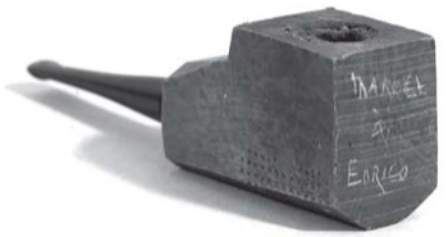
These selected chapters celebrate the romance between surrealism and chess drawn from my book, **Duchamp's Pipe: A Chess Romance − Marcel Duchamp & George Koltanowski.** Chapter two, "A Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups" looks at the creative role chess played in Hans Richter's movie, 8 x 8- A Chess Sonata. Chapter 6, T**ransatlantic Chess from Paris to New York**, looks at Marcel Duchamp's chess explorations in New York, Buenos Aires, and Brussels, including his meetings with Frank Marshall and George Koltanowski. **Diamonds and Chess**, Chapter 7, describes George Koltanowski's chess beginnings in Antwerp as the son of a Polish diamond cutter, looking at his family's escape from World War I, their return to Antwerp, and George's training as a diamond cutter, with his joining Le Cercle Maccabi d'Antwerp in 1920 marking his chess commitment.

These excerpts provide a broad sweep of history and a window into the intertwined lives of these two cerebral, chess-playing characters. For the next issues of the British Chess Magazine, we celebrate the cultural forces of chess, art, and surrealism through the experiences of Marcel Duchamp and George Koltanowski.

These excerpts are offered for your enjoyment and to place chess into a large cultural framework as part of the British Chess Magazine's perspective on chess as a force in culture.

## *Chapter 2*
## *A Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups*
## *Chess is a fairy tale of 1,001 blunders*
## —SAVIELLY TARTAKOWER

IN 1942, AT THE LARRÉ restaurant in New York, André Breton (1896-1966) introduced Duchamp to Enrico Donati (1909-2008), an Italian artist who had immigrated to America in 1939. Donati became smitten with both Surrealism and Marcel, and they became friends, regularly playing chess and talking about "things of the day." In 1946, Duchamp gave to Donati a pipe—bowl and stem—with the same geometric incisions that mark Koltanowski's pipe. The front of the bowl—which recalls the raw form of its origin—is inscribed Marcel à Enrico. In an interview in *Arts Magazine* in 1991, Donati relates how "Marcel became everything for me, my inspiration of life.… Marcel didn't talk about painting. He talked about chess. We played once or twice, and he'd say, 'You're not playing chess, you're pushing wood.' … Marcel was the most perfectionist guy you ever met in your life. He had acumen, a perception of things that was legendary. He was not human, it was something beyond: there he was a Surrealist.… That's why he did this, did that, played chess, had students he taught French to, in order to make a living.… He was a great guy, and a great loss to me when he died.… I inherited his pipe: From Marcel to Enrico. You've never seen a pipe like that."




**Pipe for Enrico Donati, 1946, by Marcel Duchamp**

Donati frequently played chess with Duchamp. They also occasionally collaborated on artistic ventures intended to offend the bourgeoisie (*épater les bourgeois*)—a Dadaist motive to provoke change. In 1945 they created an elaborate display window for Brentano's bookstore in New York promoting André Breton's book *Surrealism and Painting (Le Surréalism et la peinture)*. Donati's offering was a pair of dark leather boots; on the top front half—from the laces to the sole—he had painted pale feet with fleshy toes. The tableaux succeeded in offending the store's owner, Arthur Brentano Jr.; he demanded the display be dismantled only a few hours after it was installed.

In 1957, Duchamp and Donati appeared in the second sequence of the experimental film *8 x 8: A Chess Sonata in 8 Movements*, directed by the German-born Dada artist and filmmaker, Hans Richter (1888-1976), who had emigrated from Zurich to New York in 1940 where he met other European artists in exile. Codirected by Duchamp and Jean Cocteau (1889-1963), the film features a veritable constellation of the European and American avant-garde, including the Surrealist painters Max Ernst (1891-1976), Dorothea Tanning (1910-2012), and Yves Tanguy (1900-1955), and the architect Frederick Kiesler (1890-1965). From an interview with Enrico Donati, Kim Whinna writes, "For the sequence,they each dressed up as chess pieces and assembled on a life-size chessboard. His daughter dressed up as the queen, Marcel as the king, and Donati as a pawn. Teeny, Duchamp's wife since 1953, and her daughter Jacqueline Matisse were also there." The film's opening text—conveyed printed on a scrolling page—connects the game of chess and the imagination:

*This film deals with the world of fantasy. It is a fairytale for grownups. It explores the realm behind the magic mirror which served Lewis Carroll 100 years ago to stimulate our imagination. We used Chess—as did Carroll—as the plane, the*

*board on which all things which happen in life are also happening ... only transformed symbolic—but not less real*.

The scroll continues with a description of the artist's conflict between quotidian reality and the voice of imagination:

*The telephone which the musician-poet does not want to answer is the demanding world of reality*, *he refuses to accept ... he prefers to listen instead to the soothing flute of his inner voice ... and his suitcases*, *stolen one after the other*, *are more than that*, *they are all his earthly possessions*.

Bound within the film's imagery are Duchamp's themes of chess and imagination—as contained in the musician's suitcases that are "more than that, all his earthly possessions." In truth, these valises had held the entirety of Duchamp's life's work that he had brought to America. After that opening scroll, and following a spinning title reading "Improvisations on Chess," we see a pink-tinged chessboard on which pieces appear—moved first by invisible hands, then by two players' hands—over which a voice speaks these lines:

*The rules of the game are fixed*, *the pieces arranged by file and by rank: eight lines*, *eight-by-eight squares*, *solidly framed on a board and set on a table*. *The way each piece may be moved is approved by tradition already obscure in the East before the game began to be played for a thousand years in the West*. *And yet*, *if everything*, *even what's fixed*, *must some time or other start moving*, *then why should the humble be patient forever—never shake up his position*, *shake off his occupation*, *shake off his followers*, *shake the pieces*, *shake them for a new game—to bring into play your own imagination*, *to transform into human beings the wooden knights and queens*.

## *Chapter 4*
## *The Players at the Art of Chess*
***There must have been a time when men were demigods, or they could not have invented Chess.***
**—GUSTAV SCHENK**

THUS UNFOLDS THE EXCHANGE BETWEEN Duchamp and Koltanowski and the game they loved—a love triangle with the art of chess. The characters are incongruous: Marcel Duchamp, the audacious, ironic French artist; George Koltanowski, a memory-gifted Belgian Jewish chess champion who escaped the Holocaust in Europe; and the game of chess itself, embodied by the goddess Caïssa. First referred to in Europe in the sixteenth century, Caïssa became the patron goddess of chess devotees who, like George, would invoke her to inspire their game. The poem "Caïssa, or: The Game at Chess" (1763), by the linguist Sir William Jones, expresses in heroic couplets Duchamp and Koltanowski's mutual chess obsession: "No prize we need, our ardour to inflame; / we fight with pleasure, if we fight for fame." As part of the wandering intelligentsia of Europe in the first half of the twentieth century—buffeted by political upheavals and wars and circulating through countries—Duchamp and Koltanowski survived by wit, artistry, and alliances, their worlds meeting in the game of chess. And just as in romances, the two characters' motives are colored by friendship, rivalry, and a shared admiration for the elusive chess mistress. Their exchange of chess and ideas for over a quarter century was embodied by Duchamp's pipe. Their encounters cut across three continents—Europe, South America, and North America—and span three decades, through various chess tournaments, informal chess clubs, and cities including Brussels, Paris, The Hague, Buenos Aires, Havana, and New York City. Surviving the chaos of World War II, and as part of the European flight to America, these two men lived through the major upheavals of the twentieth

century. And while they played—in cities and tournaments, or in smoky private clubs—they reflected on chess strategy and opened their senses to its marvelous duration, all while smoking their pipes.

As individuals, they had similar and contradictory traits: George, the plain son of Polish immigrants to Belgium, and Duchamp, from a well-established French family in Normandy. Their differences of character were manifest from the beginning, as could be seen in their demeanor, posture, and gesture. Duchamp's aristocratic bearing and serene awareness is illuminated in Edward Steichen's photograph of 1917 (see figure 9), taken in New York. Images of Koltanowski at age twenty show him concentrated, sturdy, and brash—confident in his rise in the chess world— with a wide stance and direct gaze. A glamorous aura surrounded Duchamp, naturally elegant and self-aware, whereas Koltanowski eclipsed the effect of his exaggerated features by striking chess bravado.

**Figure 9. Marcel Duchamp, 1917, by Edward Steichen**

**Figure 10. George Koltanowski in Belgian army uniform, 1924**

George Koltanowski was younger, born on September 17, 1903— sixteen years later than Duchamp, born on July 28, 1887. Both men led peripatetic lives until the 1940s. They relocated following innate curiosity, restlessness, and the forced flight from two world wars. They first met in June 1923, at the Belgian Chess Championship tournament in Ghent, Belgium. In October, Koltanowski defeated Duchamp's team in Brussels. They met again at the First Chess Olympiad in Paris, 1924, where they took part in the birth of the World Chess Federation, or FIDE (Fédération Internationale des Échecs). In August 1928, they were photographed in the FIDE Assembly after another International Team Tournament—an Olympiad—at the Ridderzaal in The Hague. Then in 1929, in Paris, Duchamp famously defeated Koltanowski, a match that must have affected Koltanowski deeply; he kept the scorebook until his death. During WWII, the two escaped Europe via different routes and through different agencies. After great effort, Marcel obtained a visa through the

**Figure 11. Marcel Duchamp, Jacques Villon, Raymond Duchamp−Villon, and Villon's dog Pipe in the garden of Villon's studio, Puteaux, France, ca. 1913**

Emergency Rescue Committee. It was only by chance that Koltanowski, the captain of the Belgian chess team, was playing a chess tournament in Guatemala when the Nazis invaded Belgium in 1940; he lost his family to concentration camps and never returned to Europe. From 1940 to 1942, Duchamp lived quietly between Paris and the south of France until he managed to escape through the agency of Varian Fry and the Emergency Rescue Committee of the Red Cross in Marseilles. Duchamp left Europe by boat to Casablanca, Morocco, and Lisbon, Portugal. When he arrived in New York in 1942 he met up again with Koltanowski; that same year they formed the Greenwich Village Chess Club.

## *Chapter 5*

### Chess Painting, Chess Playing

*A game of chess is a visual and plastic thing, and if it isn't geometric in the static sense of the word, it is mechanical, since it moves. It's a drawing; it's a mechanical reality.*

**—MARCEL DUCHAMP**

BORN INTO A CULTIVATED late nineteenth century world, Marcel Duchamp was educated in Normandy and Paris. His family was intellectually alive, established in the traditional area of Upper Normandy. Marcel's father was *un notaire*, a combination civic figure, lawyer, adviser, investor, and respected member of society. The family's maternal grandfather—shipbroker and artist Émile-Frédéric Nicolle— influenced the artistic development of his grandchildren

and taught them etching and engraving at his print shop. (Older brothers Jacques Villon and Raymond Duchamp-Villon—of the two, only Jacques survived World War I—and his sister Suzanne were all artists.) Marcel's parents encouraged his facility with ideas and quixotic intellect, and his older brothers taught him chess at the age of eleven. Chess was a family pastime, a way to engage abstractly without personal conflict or emotional enmeshment. Its spirit of cerebral abstraction can be seen in the family's approach to life.

Jacques and Raymond moved to Montmartre in 1903. Marcel joined them a year later in 1904 to study art at the Académie Julian, a disappointing experience for him. Though he served in the French army in 1905, he avoided general conscription by completing his mandatory one-year military service at a print shop in Rouen. Living with his brothers in Puteaux, a suburb on the east side of Paris, Marcel worked on painting and printmaking. He was also active in their Normandy art collective, Société Normande de Peinture Moderne, which advocated using elements of Cubism, fauvism, futurism, and sacred geometry. This new approach to art influenced Duchamp's analytical stance. They were modernists in search of a new art.

The brothers hosted Sunday afternoon chess in the large garden in Puteaux, games captured in Marcel's early paintings. *The Chess Game* (1910) depicts his two brothers playing chess in a garden, with two women distractedly watching: one demurely seated at a portable tea table

**Figure 12. *The Chess Game*, 1910, by Marcel Duchamp**

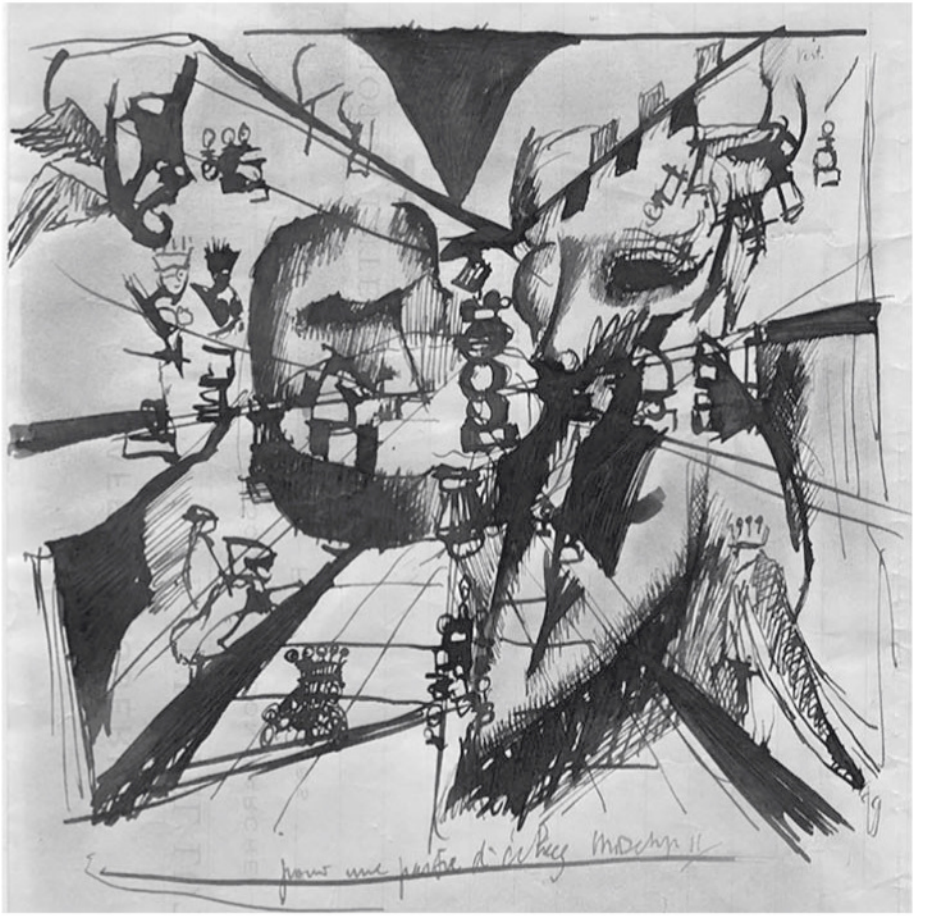


**Figure 13.** ***Study for Portrait of Chess Players (Les Joueurs d'échecs)*****, 1911, by Marcel Duchamp**

and the other reclining on the lush, green lawn. Interpreters of the painting suggest the women are Duchamp's sisters-in-law; they might also be his mother and sister Suzanne, or both his sisters.

Duchamp followed his chess theme throughout 1910 and 1911 in a series of drawings titled *Study for Portrait of Chess Players*. Each drawing depicts two opponents facing each other through a geometric substructure that forms an X, thus both uniting and dividing them. He further developed this compositional device through each of the drawings, elaborating the ways the parts of the chessboard intermingle with the opposing profiles of the players, presenting their enmeshed thoughts in various designs in the upper part of the composition. He thus evokes with his direct pencil or ink lines one of the aspects he loved about chess: the way its cerebral nature allowed him to simultaneously maintain his boundary while nonetheless establishing a connection with his rival. This

**Figure 14.** ***The Portrait of Chess Players*****, 1911, by Marcel Duchamp**

interpenetration of the players' encounter will later emerge in Duchamp's concept of the *inframince*—the *infrathin;* its essence resides in the ephemeral pipe smoke that encircles the two chess players—indeed, it resides between the breath and smoke.

A pipe also figures in his early self-portrait, painted when he was only twenty-four, the awkwardly titled *Nude (Study)*, *Sad Young Man on a Train (Nu [esquisse]*, *jeune homme triste dans un train)*, 1911-1912, in which a standing figure holds a smoking pipe, an emblem of self-reflection. The Cubo-Futurist style suggests an oil-on-canvas variation of the stop-motion photographic works of Eadweard Muybridge, such as *The Human Figure in Motion* (1901). In Duchamp's elegiac self-portrait, a series of advancing and receding outlines of semi-transparent forms, in a neutral brown coloration reminiscent of wood, conveys the figure in ambiguous space. Duchamp's use of the alternative title *Nude (Study)* predicts his exploration of transitory movement in the linear elements and woody color of his famous *Nude Descending a Staircase*

of 1912. (One could also say that the implied gender reversal from woman to man hints at his later self-transformation as Rrose Sélavy, his female alter-ego. The themes of movement suggests his unsettled psyche.) The repeating outlines of the elongated, pipe-smoking figure emphasize both the longing for and the ennui of travel, conveying Marcel's sense of himself as transitory—and indeterminate as his destination.

As World War I began, Marcel felt uneasy in France. Though his father had always encouraged his sons' individual choices, he was nonetheless a patriot. His father had served, and his two brothers volunteered for military service in 1914, whereas Marcel again avoided conscription, this time thanks to a minor heart murmur granting him a medical reprieve. Marcel's efforts to avoid conscription went against his family's ethos, and his civilian garb was disdained in militarized France. He welcomed the chance in 1915 to go to New York—though he remained under military scrutiny until 1918.

When Duchamp arrived in New York in 1915, Walter Pach—his Paris friend and the curator of the 1913 Armory Show—met him at the boat and took him to the West Sixty-Seventh Street apartment of the collectors Walter and Louise Arensberg, where he stayed for three months. Later he had a studio on the upper floor of the apartment, and could enter through there to the Arensbergs'. Walter Arensberg, a poet, was wellconnected in avant-garde literary and artistic circles. He knew the most audacious artists and writers in New York, many of whom attended the Arensbergs' lively salon evenings, including Walter Pach, artist Man Ray (1890-1976), poets Wallace Stevens (1879-1955) and William Carlos Williams (1883-1963)—and Marcel Duchamp.

These were witty, erotically charged events, mixing American artists and poets such as Stevens and Williams with bohemian French ones, including Picabia and Duchamp. Writer Gabrielle Buffet-Picabia sets the scene: "No sooner had we arrived than we became part of a motley international band which turned night into day, conscientious objectors of all nationalities … living in an inconceivable orgy of sexuality, jazz, and alcohol." William Carlos Williams recounts:

*I was a bit late and the room was already crowded—by Frenchmen mostly. I remember of course Marcel Duchamp. At the end of the room was a French girl, of say eighteen or less, attended by some older woman. She lay reclining upon a divan, her legs straight out before her, surrounded by young men who had each a portion of her body in his possession which he caressed attentively, apparently unconscious of any rival. Duchamp was devoting himself to her legs which he caressed with the tips of his fingers. It was something I had not seen before. Her feet were being kissed, her shins, her knees, even above the knees, though as far as I could tell there was a gentleman's agreement that she not be undressed here.*

Unimpressed, Williams left in frustration, saying, "You're all so damned sophisticated," recalled actress and writer Mina Loy (1882- 1966). A good friend of both Williams and Duchamp, Loy describes Duchamp as a detached seducer. "Slick as a prestidigitator … he could insinuate his hand under a women's bodice and hug her body without it all being apparent." She was uncomfortable with his sexual slang, and the way he taught raunchy French expressions to Beatrice Wood and other young American women. Certainly, Duchamp affected an ironic detachment that marked him as different: to women he seemed vulnerable, while to men he seemed intellectually cocksure. As Gabrielle Buffet-Picabia remarked, "This attitude of abdicating everything, even himself, which he charmingly displayed between two drinks, his elaborate puns, his contempt for all values, even the

**Figure 15.** ***Nude (Study), Sad Young Man on a Train (Nu [esquisse], jeune homme triste dans un train),*** **1911-1912, by Marcel Duchamp**

sentimental, were not the least reason for the curiosity he aroused, and the attraction he exerted on men and women alike."

Among other members of the avant-garde, Marcel also came to know the photographers Alfred Stieglitz and Edward Steichen. Steichen was fascinated by him, as is evident in his thoughtful 1917 portrait (see figure 9 in chapter 4). That same year, Alfred Stieglitz photographed Duchamp's *Fountain* against a backdrop of a Marsden Hartley painting in his gallery, 291. Five years later Stieglitz took a portrait, likely based on Duchamp's staging.

Duchamp played late-night chess games with the Arensbergs, who became his steadfast patrons, appreciating as they did his art, wit, and chess acumen. Larry Witham offers, "Besides art, sex, and alcohol, the other international language at the Arensbergs was chess. Arensberg himself had been captain of the Harvard chess team in his student days. No matter how raucous things became, there was always a chess game going on in the corner of Arensbergs' apartment, often with Duchamp at the board. Frequently, after everyone had left, Duchamp and Arensberg would play chess until daybreak." They continued to play correspondence chess even after their travels separated them, first from Duchamp's departure for Buenos Aires in 1918, and later from their move to California in 1921.

The outrageous behavior continued with Duchamp's ideas in the studio as he reacted to the dominance of painting, with its undercurrent of production that repelled him. Duchamp began to challenge the viewer's notions of art by exhibiting ordinary, otherwise unremarkable functional objects that he placed in a new context with the intention of eliciting a sense of surprise and disconnected reality. He isolated his *Bottle Rack (Porte-bouteilles)*, 1914, on a pedestal, thereby imbuing it with ambiguous meaning. This reversal appealed to the Dadaists, who appreciated Duchamp's negation of high art in their offense toward conventional bourgeois culture. Later, the reversal also appealed to the Surrealists in their search for a new spiritual vision, which was anticipated in the *Manifesto of Surrealism (Manifeste du surréalisme)* of 1924. Even years after *Bottle Rack* was created, it continued to have a dislocating presence for the viewer. In 1948, Jean Bazaine, a writer and friend of Duchamp's brother Jacques, writes: "This bottle rack, torn from its utilitarian context and washed up on the beach, is invested with the lonely dignity of the derelict. Good for nothing, there to be used, ready for anything, it is alive. It lives on the fringe of existence its own disturbing, absurd life. The disturbing object—that is the first step to art." Nonetheless, Duchamp's industrial objects, his "readymades," both dismayed and outraged most of his viewers, even up to the present day.

**Figure 16. *Bottle Rack*, replica, 1921, by Marcel Duchamp. (Original version from 1914)**

# Endgame Studies

by Ian Watson
ian@irwatson.uk

1

**P Byway**
*Original*
**WIN**

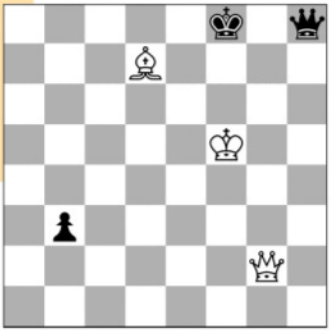
2

**P Byway**
*Original*
**WIN**

3

**V Halberstadt**
*Problem 1967*
**WIN**

4



**J Vandiest**
*Themes-64 1970*
**WIN**

# THE STUDIES FROM THE WCSC

The pawnless ending of queen and bishop versus queen is generally a draw. It's not even a difficult one to draw; if I got it in a game and had the extra bishop, I wouldn't bother playing on—I'd just offer a draw. However, there are plenty of positions that are exceptions, enough of them that study composers have been able to construct surprising win studies. The first research on this was in the 19th century, notably by L. Centurini and J. Berger, whose names are given to the mating mechanisms they discovered. Now Paul Byway has sent me three interrelated studies he has composed using the Berger and Centurini mates. Two of them form a pair, in that the only difference in the positions is a minor shift of the White king, but this apparently trivial difference completely changes the solution—from one that leads to Berger's mate to one that leads to Centurini's. Such a single change in position, with solutions that are wholly different but related, is what is called a 'twin.' Twin studies are unusual, being difficult to compose, but are satisfyingly unified.

The name 'twin' might have been 'dual' if that word hadn't already had pejorative implications because 'duals' are defects in studies; they are alternative White moves that achieve the stipulation. The basic concept of a study is that White's moves should be unique—he should be walking a narrow path where the slightest slip means failure. That's what makes us enjoy studies. So, duals are not usually accepted. There's an exception to that: time-wasting moves, meaning that White does something different, but it doesn't help him make progress, so he has to then revert to the intended solution. Those are generally accepted, but most other duals are deemed to demolish a study.

Some kinds of endgame studies are prone to having duals, not least those with open positions with lots of available White checking sequences. Thus, older Q&B versus Q studies were usually infested with duals that the composers hadn't spotted; Centurini's 1858 Q&B vs. Q composition is just one example. This month's studies have stood up to computer scrutiny, however: Paul's, of course, but also Halberstadt's and Vandiest's. That the latter is sound is somewhat surprising, as it is from 1970 (before personal computers), and its solution is 29 moves long. At every move, there are many alternative White moves, yet the databases confirm that the sequence is indeed unique (except for time-wasting duals). I surmise that Vandiest had access to some powerful computer and created one of the first tablebases. It's a masterly composition but probably unsolvable without clues: the Black king is driven to the b-file, then down to the bottom-right corner, all with checks, and the first non-checking move is the final, 29th move. Halberstadt's has (a mere) 13 moves, but there are several non-checking White moves in its first seven. No clues for Paul's two studies because their solutions are only six and seven moves. You may be wondering where the third study Paul sent me has gone; I'm saving it for a future issue—then you'll be able to test yourself to see whether you remember the QB vs. Q mechanisms.
No duals, but all these duels are jewels.....

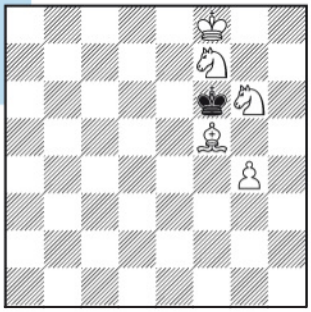
The answers are on page 639.

# PROBLEM WORLD

by Christopher Jones
cjajones1@yahoo.co.uk
*Grandmaster of Chess Composition*

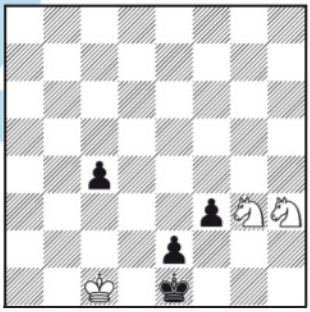
Solutions are given on page 638

1



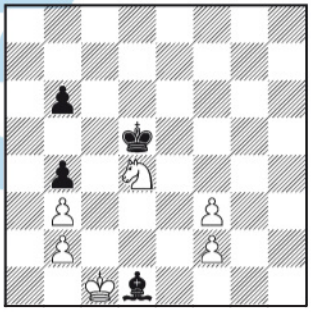
**Udo Marks (Germany)**
*Mate in 3 (b)Ng6>e6 (c)Ng6>b7*
**ORIGINAL**

2



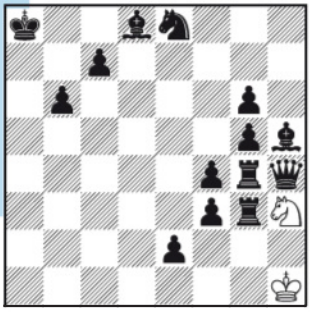
**Paul Michelet (London)**
*Mate in 6*
**ORIGINAL**

3



**Stanislav Hudak (Slovakia)**
*Helpmate in 4 - 2 solutions*
**ORIGINAL**

4



**Ljubomir Ugren (Slovenia)**
*Helpmate in 8 (b)-Pb6, helpmate in 7*
**ORIGINAL**

Openings for Amateurs

By Pete Tamburro; ptamburro@aol.com

# Patterns Out of Your Opening (PART VI)

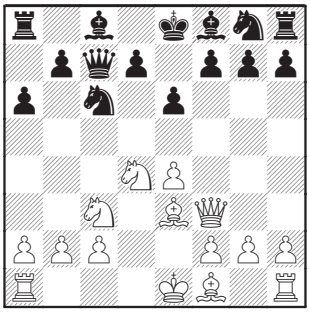
This is a game with a dazzling finish. White comes up with a plan focused on putting pressure on Black's d7 square. Black hit a critical point where a different move would have made it more of a fight, but that happens all the time, especially in amateur play, so learn from the attacking idea in this game. There are some suggestions at the end that are worth paying attention to.

**Wei Yi (2675)** - A. **Haast (2352) [B48]**

Tata Steel Group B Wijk aan Zee, 2015

**1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘c6 5.♘c3 ♕c7 6.♗e3 a6** White has a choice of very popular moves such as ♗d3 and Be2 and the most popular: ♕d2; however...

**7.♕f3**



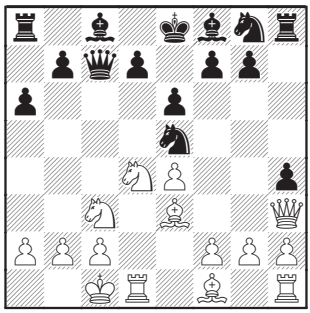
Regular readers of this column will recall the Nightmares in the Najdorf series where, instead of the usual ♗g5, f4 and ♕f3 sequence, White played ♕f3 first. It would be interesting to review that line. White has four pieces out and is ready to castle. Black looks for complications, and he's going to get his wish!

**7...♘e5** Attacking the queen and heading to c4, but the White queen isn't planning on staying on f3 and the Nc4 doesn't have the same impact as in other Sicilian positions, as we will see. A very Sicilian idea would be 7...b5 with the idea of ♗b7.

**8.♕g3** There is a formidable list of all-star grandmasters that have reached this position as White. Check it out.

**8...h5** Now, White plays another developing move as there is a king in the centre a long way from being castled. There's a psychological aspect as well. White shows absolute disdain for the threat on his queen.

**9.0-0-0 h4 10.♕h3**



Not the usual place for a queen, but it has its merits: it will support an f4-f5 move,

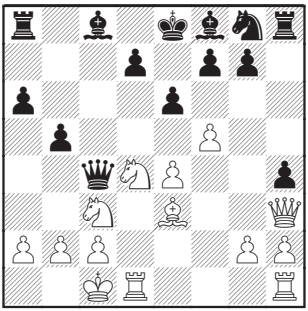
and there is an indirect pressure on d7 and direct pressure on e6 which should not be underestimated.

**10...b5** The kingside needs some support: 10...♘g6

**11.f4 ♘c4!?** Does Black believe White will hold fast to his bishop?

**12.♗xc4 ♕xc4** What's Black's plan here? Is it the original plan with ♗b7 and ♖c8 and b4? Does ♗b4, threatening to break up the castled position force White to slow down? Think about what you would do here as Black.

**13.f5!?**



White has time to get his last rook into play. Just look at the Black kingside pieces still sitting there on move 13. Amateurs should not play this type of opening. Let the masters play this stuff, and, even then, Black goes astray. It is far more difficult to defend than attack. Look at White's pieces - all optimally placed. Black has one piece beyond the first rank. Rather than 13.♖he1 White presses the attack. There could have been a real Sicilian battle with 13...♗b7 *(13...b4 14.♘a4! ♕c7 15.f5±)* 14.♔b1 ♘f6 15.e5 ♘d5 16.♘e4 ♘b4 17.b3 ♕c7 18.♗d2 ♕a5 19.♗xb4 ♗xb4 20.c3 ♗xe4+ 21.♖xe4 ♗xc3 22.f5 ♗xd4 23.♖exd4 ♕c7 24.♖xh4 ♖xh4 25.♕xh4 ♕c5 26.b4 ♕f8 27.♕d4 That's a lot of moves to find with the clock ticking. White seems to come out on top with Rhe1, but there is many a slip-twixt cup and lip.

**13...♗b7 14.♖hf1?** If this is why White didn't play to e1, then he didn't consider Black's reply.

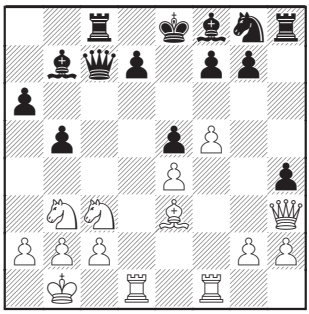
As in my 20 tips list, don't forget to get those rooks on a1 or h1 into the game. 14.♖he1.

**14...e5!** Making sure the f-file isn't opened for the rook.

**15.♘b3 ♕c7** Black makes a judicious decision. Forcing a counter with one piece is not a good idea.

Interesting is 15...b4 16.f6! Remember the statement above about the indirect threat on d7? A now very direct mate threat. 16...♕e6 17.fxg7 ♗xg7 *(17...♕xh3?? 18.gxf8♕+ ♔xf8 19.gxh3 bxc3 20.♖xd7 ♗xe4 21.♖dxf7+ and White is clearly winning.)* 18.♘a4 ♗xe4 19.♘b6 ♖b8 20.♘xd7 ♕xh3 21.gxh3 ♖c8 22.♘bc5 ♗g6 23.♖f2±.

**16.♔b1 ♖c8??**



The idea is too routine: a threat on c2 with b4 next move and possibly Bxe4. The idea is good, but it ignores what your opponent can do. Too often we get so wrapped up in our plans that we forget the other guy gets moves.

Critical was blocking the f6 move with 16...♘f6! Then a continuation would be 17.g4 ♘xe4 *(*Or *17...b4 18.♘d5 ♘xd5 19.exd5 a5 20.f6 g6 21.♖fe1* with a fight*.)* 18.♘d5 ♗xd5 19.♖xd5 ♖c8 20.♕g2 ♘f6 21.♖d3 h3 *(21...♘xg4 22.♖c3 ♕xc3 23.bxc3 ♘xe3 24.♕b7)* 22.♕e2

♗e7± *(22...d5 23.g5)* 23.♗d2 ♖h4 24.g5 ♘e4 25.f6 gxf6 26.gxf6 ♗xf6 27.♗e1 and White has compensation for the pawns minus. A typical unbalanced Sicilian game. In this game White was too eager and Black too routine in not considering White's big threat.

**17.f6! ♘xf6 18.♖xf6! gxf6** 18...b4 Black saw this: 19.♖xf7! bxc3 20.♖dxd7.

**19.♗b6** Not to beat a point to death, but the indirect threat in the opening that became direct decides this game.

**19...♕c6** The harassment of this poor woman is criminal and fatal. See if you can figure it all out from here.

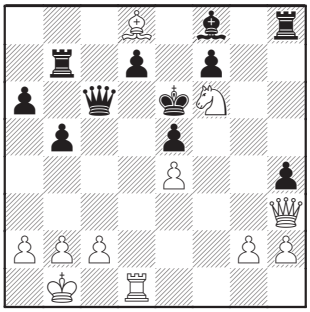
**20.♘a5 ♕e6 21.♘xb7 ♖b8 22.♘d5 ♖xb7** There is no relief in 22...♕xh3 23.♘c7+ ♔e7 24.♗c5+ d6 25.♖xd6 and it's a mate in three! The poor queen after being hassled from one side of the board to the other is now being ignored, adding insult to injury. A remarkable position.

**23.♕c3!** Good, but not as precise as 23.♕f3±.

**23...♕c6 24.♘xf6+! ♔e7** It's a picturesque mate after 24...♕xf6 25.♕c8+ ♔e7 26.♗c5+ ♔e6 27.♕e8+ ♗e7 28.♖d6#.

**25.♗d8+ ♔e6** 25...♔xd8 26.♕xc6 and the pin on d7 is an echo of the theme.

**26.♕h3#**



**1-0**

A glorious and apt finish. The queen returned to what initially looked like an awkward square, but it had a purpose. Yes, the game need not have gone that way, but to have the idea and be able to carry it through with imagination is admirable.

What does this mean for the average player?

No matter what your level of ability you should be familiar with the plans of attack and defence in your opening.

In order to get that familiarity you have to play over games that show you the ideas for those plans.

No matter what your plan is, it's better to make sure you get all your pieces into the game-the minor pieces on their most active squares and the major pieces positioned so they are long range direct or indirect threats. Know what their roles are in the opening.

You must spend time while your opponent is thinking trying to figure out what his threats and plans might be.

Knowing routines in attack are good, but don't get too routine as the position and your opponent might have some surprises for you.

Don't play an opening you don't understand or is beyond your level just because some GM you adore plays it. Stay within yourself and your abilities.

Look at my Openings for Amateurs-Next Steps book for the 20 ways to raise your rating without studying the openings. It gives you a framework for mental discipline at the board and will greatly help every phase of your game.

I hope you have enjoyed these six games as they demonstrated the necessity of knowing the attacking potentialities of your openings. Quite a few more are in my OFA books. Check them out!

# SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS

## This month's originals

Readers get good value for money this month as a result of a host of twinnings. Twinning is a common feature of helpmates, as exemplified by Stanislav's problem (where you are to find two collaborative bwbwbwbw# move sequences), though Ljubomir's twinning has an unusual twist - in the diagram position it takes eight moves to reach mate, but take away the black pawn at b6 and there is a completely different move sequence leading to mate, but this time in only seven moves. Twinnings in direct mate problems such as Udo's are less common, but in this case Udo demonstrates the range of possibilities in a straightforward position. This should be an easy starter for your solving. For the other problems, especially the helpmates, there is no indignity if you have to read on to see what the solutions are.

## An "easy starter"

In Udo's diagram, the black king is already under house arrest, so we must give him some breathing space. The key is **1.♘d6!**. After **1…♔g5**, White plays **2.♔g8**, and now whichever way Black goes he is mated - after **2…♔h6** by **3.♘f7** and after **2…♔f6** by **3.♘e4**. Both these mates are ideal mates - every possible flight square is guarded once and once only; and every unit on the board is used. The mates in the other two parts of this problem are also ideal. For (b), we start with the g6 knight placed instead at e6. Now the way to give Black a move is to play **1.♔g8!**, after which we have **1…♔e7 2.♘c7 ♔f6 3.♘d5#**. And when, in (c), the g6 knight instead starts from b7 it's **1.♗e4! ♔e6 2.♘c5+ ♔f6 3.g5#**.

## Again, two white knights weaving a mating net

Regular readers will have seen the name of Paul Michelet frequently both in Ian Watson's studies column and in *Problem World*. A prolific composer, his ideas often can be expressed either in 'white to win' form or in 'white to mate in a specified number of moves (in this case six)' form. In fact, this six-mover is related to a draw study of Paul's recently published in *BCM*. We begin with **1.♘f5!**. Now if **1…f2**, **2.♘e3** leaves Black with no defense to the threatened **3.♘c2#**. Best is **1…♔f1**, whereupon we have **2.♘e3+ ♔e1 3.♔c2** (zugzwang) **c3** (best) **4.♔xc3 f2** (now there is nothing else) **5.♘f4!** (surprisingly the other knight becomes active) and, whatever piece Black promotes to at f1, **6.♘d3** is mate.

## Back to the murky world of helpmates

I like helpmates in which the two solutions, while going together congenially, are quite different. In Ladislav's problem, all Black's moves are by his king, setting off on radically different journeys, and half of White's moves are by his king, playing his part in tracking down his opposite number. In the second solution, Black actually captures two white men, including, perhaps surprisingly, the bishop - (remember, in helpmates Black moves first) **1.♔d2 ♔e4 2.♔e1 ♔e3 3.♔f1 ♗e2+ 4.♔e1 ♘c2#** and **1.♔xd1 ♘e6 2.♔c2 ♔c6 3.♔xb3 ♔xb6 4.♔a4 ♘c5#**. Both mates are model mates - each potential flight square is neutralized either by being occupied by a black piece or by being guarded by one white piece. (They are not ideal mates, such as seen in Udo's problem, because there are white pawns on the board that don't contribute to the mate.)

There is a similarity in Ljubomir's problem, in that the black king marches off in two

(See page 634)

different directions to far-apart final resting places. In the diagram position, it's **1.f2 ♔h2 2.♖e3 ♔h1 3.♕g3 ♘xg5 4.♔b7 ♘e4 5.♔c6 ♘xg3 6.♔d5 ♘f1 7.♔e4 ♔h2 8.♔f3 ♘d2#**. Without the black pawn at b6, and with the challenge now to find a one-move-shorter move sequence, it's **1.♘d6 ♔h2 2.♖g2+ ♔h1 3.♕f2 ♘xf4 4.♕a7 ♘e6 5.♖b4 ♘xd8 6.♖b8 ♘e6 7.♘b7 ♘xc7#**. The pawn at b6 is a 'technical pawn,' preventing the moves ♕f2>a7 and ♖b4>b8.

Overall, a triumphant *Problem World* for knights, which make all but one (Udo's **3.g5#** in part c) of the mating moves!

# SOLUTIONS TO ENDGAMES

(See page 632)

## Byway - king on f7

**1.♕e2 d4 2.♗e5 d3 3.♕f3+ ♕g2 4.♕h5+ ♔g1 5.♗d4+ ♔f1 6.♕d1** mate. That's Berger's mate.

## Byway - king on f5

**1.♕h5+ ♔g2 2.♕g4+ ♔f1 3.♕d1+ ♔g2 4.♕xd5+ ♔f1 5.♕d3+ ♔g2 6.♔g4 ♕f2 7.♗f4 wins.** Centurini's mate arises in the line **6...♔h1+ 7.♗g3 ♕g2 8.♕b1+ ♕g1 9.♕h7+ ♔g2 10.♕h3** mate.

## Halberstadt

**1.♗e5+ ♔a8 2.♕b5 ♕a7+ 3.♔e2 ♕b6 4.♕d5+ ♕b7 5.♕a5+ ♕a7 6.♕b4 ♕a6+ 7.♔d2 ♕b6 8.♕e4+ ♕b7 9.♕a4+ ♕a7 10.♕c6+ ♕b7 11.♕e8+ ♔a7 12.♗d4+ ♔a6 13.♕a4** mate.

The main sidelines are **6.♕b5? ♕b6; and 7.♔e1? ♕c8 8.♕a5+ ♔b7 9.♕b5+ ♔a8; and 7...♕c8 8.♕a5+ ♔b7 9.♕b5+ ♔a8 10.♗d6 ♕b7 11.♕e8+.**

## Vandiest

**1.♕a8+ ♔g7 2.♕a1+ ♔h7 3.♕h1+ ♔g7 4.♕g1+ ♔f7 5.♗e6+ ♔e8 6.♗f7+ ♔d7 7.♕a7+ ♔c6 8.♗e8+ ♔d5 9.♕a5+ ♔c4 10.♗b5+ ♔d5 11.♗a6+ ♔c6 12.♕b5+ ♔d6 13.♕b6+ ♔d5 14.♕xb3+ ♔d6 15.♕b4+ ♔c6 16.♗b5+ ♔b6 17.♗c4+ ♔c6 18.♕b5+ ♔c7 19.♕a5+ ♔c6 20.♗b5+ ♔c5 21.♗a4+ ♔c4 22.♕b5+ ♔c3 23.♕b3+ ♔d2 24.♕d1+ ♔e3 25.♕c1+ ♔f2 26.♕d2+ ♔g3 27.♕e1+ ♔h2 28.♕f2+ ♔h3 29.♗d7** wins. A splendidly quiet move as the climax of an extraordinary round-the-board chase. This study was the winner of a composing competition held as a memorial to Vitaly Halberstadt who had died in 1967.

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